

# **Yoga Practice in 21<sup>st</sup> Century Britain: The Lived Experience of Yoga Practitioners**

**Chizuko Hunt**

Thesis submitted to De Montfort University  
in partial fulfilment for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy  
in Health Study

2010

## **Abstract**

### **Yoga Practice in 21<sup>st</sup> Century Britain: The Lived Experience of Yoga Practitioners**

This thesis investigates the nature of ‘the self’ modern yoga practitioners cultivate. This ontological question is further divided into three sub-questions to find the answer step-by-step. They are: (1) How yoga practice influences practitioners' health and well-being; (2) How yoga practice influences the management of life crises; (3) How yoga practice influences the ‘sense of self’.

Modern yoga in the West has been expanding rapidly after the Second World War, and the last 15 years in particular show an exponential growth. Although the numbers are hard to estimate, there were reportedly over 2.5 million practitioners in Britain alone in 2004 (Singleton, 2008). Similar numbers of yoga practitioners were reported in other countries (Strauss, 2004). However, the modern form of yoga practiced in Britain is not the same as the Indian traditional form of yoga. In Britain, the British Wheel of Yoga (BWY) officially represents the majority of the yoga population.

This study has used hermeneutic phenomenology, chiefly that of Heidegger and of Merleau-Ponty, as a research methodology, because it enabled the researcher to understand the subjective lived experiences of modern yoga practitioners. For data collection, 15 in-depth interviews of BWY members, selected using the snowballing and theoretical methods, were carried out. Through analysis, six major themes emerged. They were: ‘Health and Well being’; ‘Management of Life Crises’; ‘Sense of Self and Yoga Development’; ‘CAMs & GPs’; ‘Relationships’; ‘Spirituality’.

Following the analysis of the main themes, I explored the meaning of ‘the self’, and discussed it from two points of view: the inner-self arisen from embodied practice of yoga through relaxation and bodily proprioception, and the outer self situated in-the-world in relation with other people, which was captured as social self, and considered from various dimensions such as language and ideology, BWY lineage, globalization and commercialism. In a nutshell, this study found that ‘the self’ for the BWY practitioners was embodied, health orientated and secular.

‘The self’ of yoga was further compared and contrasted with four self development models: Patanjali’s Yoga Sutra; Maslow’s Hierarchy of Human Needs; Dreyfus/Merleau-Ponty’s Skill Acquisition model and The Ten Oxherding Pictures of Zen Buddhism.

Lastly, the value of yoga for public health was explored using the anthropological idea of dis-ease. This study found that yoga’s therapeutic usefulness mainly came from ‘empowerment’, providing practitioners with yoga skills to take control of their own body and health.

## **Declaration**

This thesis is the result of my own work without any collaboration with others. No part of this study has been submitted for any other academic qualification.

This thesis conforms to the limits outlined by De Montfort University for PhD Theses in Health Studies

## **Acknowledgement**

I would like to offer my deepest gratitude to my supervisors, Professor Denis Anthony and Dr Tina Harris at De Montfort University for their unfailing support and encouragement. Without them, I might not have finished this thesis.

My heartfelt thanks go to my yoga friends who have believed in me and helped me to complete this study. I am also indebted to the BWY members and the participants for allowing me to interview them. Because of their kind contribution and generosity, I was able to gain an insight into their lived experience of yoga practice.

Finally, my special thanks go to my friends and family for supporting me and giving me encouragement until the end.

**Abstract**  
**Author Declaration**  
**Acknowledgements**

**CONTENTS**

<b>List of figures</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>Glossary of terms and Abbreviations</b>	<b>11</b>
<b>1. INTRODUCTION</b>	<b>12</b>
<b>2. LITERATURE REVIEW</b>	<b>22</b>
<b>2.1. Introduction</b>	<b>22</b>
<b>2.2. Classification of literature on yoga</b>	<b>23</b>
2.2.1 Historical literature of yoga	23
2.2.2 Modern approaches to the study of yoga	24
2.2.2.1 Scientific and experimental approaches, which use mainly quantitative	25
2.2.2.2 Medical approaches which have recently been proliferating mainly use quantitative approaches.	26
2.2.2.3 Yoga as a Complementary and Alternative Medicine (CAM):	26
2.2.2.4 Psychological study of yoga and meditation:	26
2.2.2.5 Numerous textbooks written by yoga gurus and Hindu academics.	26
2.2.3 Modern yoga studies	27
2.2.4 Justification of this study	28
<b>2.3. Yoga and the self</b>	<b>29</b>
2.3.1 The BWY diploma teacher training course syllabus, Patanjali's Eight Limbs of Yoga model	30
2.3.2 The various ideas about 'the self' in yoga	33
2.3.3 Some key features of modern yoga	34
2.3.4 The range of other alternative life choices	35
<b>2.4. Modernity and the self</b>	<b>36</b>
2.4.1 Modernity and yoga	36
<b>2.5. Outline of phenomenological approach</b>	<b>37</b>
2.5.1 Phenomenology and its key concepts for this study	39
2.5.1.1 Heidegger's phenomenology	39
2.5.1.2 Merleau-Ponty's phenomenology	41
<b>2.6 The close link between Yoga, Buddhism and Phenomenology</b>	<b>44</b>
2.6.1 Yoga and Buddhism	46
2.6.2 Buddhism and phenomenology	47
2.6.3 Yoga and phenomenology	48
<b>2.7. Development of the self in Phenomenology and Asian Thought</b>	<b>50</b>
2.7.1 Dreyfus's Skill Acquisition model	50
2.7.2 The Ten Oxherding Pictures of Zen model	52
<b>2.8. The New Age Movement</b>	<b>55</b>
2.8.1 Spirituality	55

2.8.2 The New Age Movement	56
2.8.3 The self project	58
2.8.4 The social implications	58
<b>2.9. The British Wheel of Yoga</b>	<b>59</b>
2.9.1 A very brief guide to yoga texts	60
2.9.2 Modern Postural Yoga (MPY)	61
2.9.3 A history of the British Yoga	63
2.9.4 A short history of the BWY	65
2.9.5 The characteristics of the organization	67
2.9.6 Its yoga practice and the members	68
2.9.7 Yoga therapy	69
<b>2.10. Summary</b>	<b>70</b>
 <b>3. CHOOSING METHODOLOGY</b>	 <b>71</b>
<b>3.1 Introduction</b>	<b>71</b>
<b>3.2 Choosing a Methodology</b>	<b>71</b>
3.2.1 Qualitative research methodology	71
3.2.2 Comparing three qualitative methodologies	73
3.2.2.1 Ethnography	73
3.2.2.2 Biographical Narrative Interpretive Methods	76
3.2.3 Phenomenology as methodology	78
3.2.4 Descriptive phenomenology and Hermeneutic phenomenology	79
3.2.4.1 Phenomenological reduction	79
3.2.4.2 Descriptive phenomenology	80
3.2.4.3 Hermeneutic phenomenology	82
3.2.5 Methodological problem with design	83
<b>3.3 Summary</b>	<b>84</b>
 <b>4. HERMENEUTIC PHENOMENOLOGICAL METHODS IN CONTEXT</b>	 <b>85</b>
<b>4.1. Introduction</b>	<b>85</b>
<b>4.2. Theoretical issues of research design</b>	<b>85</b>
4.2.1 Overview for the data collection	86
4.2.2 Interview forms	86
4.2.3 How many participants do I need?	87
4.2.4 Sampling Methods	88
Selection of samples	89
Selection procedures for participants	89
Non-probability sampling strategy	91
Interviews in steps	92
Transcribing interviews	92
Verification of transcription	93
4.2.5 The role of the researcher	93
<b>4.3. Ethical principles</b>	<b>94</b>
4.3.1 General principles	94
4.3.2 Informed Consent	96
4.3.3 Confidentiality	96
4.3.4 Consequences	96

<b>4.4. Data collection in steps: How I did it</b>	<b>97</b>
4.4.1 The design of data collection methods	97
4.4.2 Ethical Guidelines	98
4.4.3 Recruitment	98
4.4.4 Interviewing process	99
4.4.5 Interview guide	100
4.4.6 Duration of interview	100
4.4.7 Interview materials	101
4.4.8 Transcription notations	101
4.4.9 Rationale for Data analysis	102
4.4.10 Process of analysis for this study	104
4.4.11 The six emergent themes	112
HEALTH & WELL BEING	112
MANAGEMENT OF LIFE CRISES	112
SENSE OF SELF & YOGA DEVELOPMENT	112
CAM & GP	112
RELATIONSHIPS	112
SPIRITUALITY	113
<b>4.5. Summary of the research group</b>	<b>113</b>
4.5.1 An outline of the group	113
4.5.2 General characteristics of the group	114
Yoga skill statuses:	115
Gender:	115
Age group:	115
Nationalities:	115
Religion	116
Educational qualifications:	116
Yoga teaching:	116
Duration of yoga practice:	116
The place of learning:	116
4.5.3 An outline of the individual participants	117
<b>4.6. Evaluation of the use of ATLAS.ti for this study</b>	<b>121</b>
<b>4.7. Research trustworthiness and transparency</b>	<b>122</b>
<b>4.8. Summary</b>	<b>123</b>
<b>5. MAJOR THEMES AND FINDINGS</b>	<b>125</b>
<b>5.1. Introduction</b>	<b>125</b>
<b>5.2. Health and Well-being</b>	<b>128</b>
5.2.1 The stories of ill-health and recovery	128
5.2.2 The Participant felt that yoga practice enhanced their life	132
5.2.3 The importance of the breath	133
<b>5.3. Management of Life Crises: Using Maslow's 'Hierarchy of Human Needs' model.</b>	<b>135</b>
5.3.1 Physical needs	137
5.3.2 Illness	137
5.3.3 Relational needs	138
5.3.4 Psychological needs	140
5.3.5 Spiritual needs	141
<b>5.4 Sense of Self and yoga development: using Dreyfus's skill acquisition model.</b>	<b>142</b>
5.4.1 Becoming a novice: joining a yoga class	145

5.4.2 Learning skills: practising postural yoga	145
5.4.3 Becoming an expert: Teacher training course and teaching	147
5.4.4 Further yoga training in specialized areas	150
5.4.5 Finding one's own path	151
5.4.6 Finding oneself: developing theories of life	153
5.4.7 Becoming a super-expert (DCT): teaching next generation of teachers	155
<b>5.5. CAM &amp; GP</b>	<b>157</b>
5.5.1 GPs and biomedicine	158
5.5.2 Some GPs were sympathetic to yoga	160
5.5.3 Yoga practitioners and CAM	162
5.5.4 Yoga at the NHS	163
5.5.5 Other CAM	164
<b>5.6. Relationships</b>	<b>166</b>
5.6.1 Relationship with the self	166
5.6.2 Relationship with the family	169
5.6.3 Relationship with yoga community	170
5.6.4 Relationship with society	174
<b>5.7 Spirituality</b>	<b>177</b>
5.7.1 What 'spirituality' was for secular BWY members	178
5.7.2 How 'spirituality' was expressed: awareness of the inner self	179
5.7.3 How 'spirituality' is achieved: importance of Embodiment	180
5.7.4 How they learned 'spirituality': transmission of yoga knowledge	181
1. Modern Yoga lineage of yoga learning	182
2. The impact of media transmission of yoga programmes	184
3. What the BWY members learned	185
4. Some views towards Guru-guided schools	186
<b>5.8 Summary of the findings</b>	<b>188</b>
5.8.1 Health and Well-being:	188
5.8.2 Management of life crises:	188
5.8.3 The sense of self and yoga development:	189
5.8.4 CAM and GP:	189
5.8.5 Relationships:	190
5.8.6 Spirituality:	190
<b>5.9 Answers to the research questions</b>	<b>191</b>
<b>5.10 Summary</b>	<b>192</b>
<b>6. DISCUSSION</b>	<b>194</b>
<b>6.1 Introduction</b>	<b>194</b>
Reappraisal of the literature	194
Summarizing the use of hermeneutic phenomenology in this study	196
<b>6.2 Discussion of study findings in relation to research questions</b>	<b>197</b>
6.2.1 Yoga and health	197
6.2.2 Yoga and management of life crises	203
6.2.3 Yoga and sense of self	205
6.2.4 The nature of the self	212
6.2.4.1 The embodied self	213
6.2.4.2 The social self	220
<b>6.3 The self in the framework of four developmental models</b>	<b>230</b>



6.3.1 Patanjali's Yoga Sutra: Classical Yoga	230
6.3.2 Maslow's 'Hierarchy of Human Needs': Human Potential Movement.	232
6.3.3 Skill Acquisition model: Phenomenological Philosophy	233
6.3.4 The Ten Oxherding Picture: Zen Buddhism	233
6.3.5 Critical appraisal of 'the self' in the modern age	234
<b>6.4 'Dis-ease' and Yoga: the implications for public health</b>	<b>237</b>
6.4.1 Secularization and medicalization of modern yoga	237
6.4.2 Empowerment	239
6.4.3 Yoga practice as a form of health care system	240
6.4.4 Yoga as a Complementary Medicine	241
6.4.5 Suggestions for health policy	243
<b>6.5 Reflections and suggestions for future research</b>	<b>243</b>
Reflections and limitations of the study	243
Recommendations for future study	245
<b>7. SUMMARY</b>	<b>246</b>
<b>REFERENCES</b>	<b>250</b>
<b>APPENDICES</b>	<b>277</b>
Appendix 1: Permission letter from BWY for interviewing the members	277
Appendix 2: A copy of the participant's information sheet	278
Appendix 3: A copy of the participant's consent form	279
Appendix 4: A copy of the interview guide	280
Appendix 5: A copy of the participant's questionnaire	281
Appendix 6: Some excerpts from interview diaries	283
Appendix 7: Two examples of transcripts: Teacher B and Teacher E	285
Interview: Teacher B	285
Interview: Teacher E	299
Appendix 8: The BWY Diploma teacher training course syllabus. (Currently under review)	313

## **List of figures**

<b>Figure 1: Ideas about ‘body and mind’ in yoga</b>	<b>34</b>
<b>Figure 2: Thematical grid.</b>	<b>111</b>
<b>Figure 3: Demographic information of the participants.</b>	<b>114</b>
<b>Figure 4: Six major themes.</b>	<b>125</b>
<b>Figure 5: Ill-health and recovery.</b>	<b>128</b>
<b>Figure 6: Hierarchy of needs in times of life crises.</b>	<b>136</b>
<b>Figure 7: Sense of self and yoga development.</b>	<b>143</b>
<b>Figure 8: Yoga, CAM &amp; GP.</b>	<b>158</b>
<b>Figure 9: Dis-ease and its resolution</b>	<b>240</b>

## Glossary of terms and Abbreviations

*The Sanskrit notation follows mainly the examples from “The Golden Books of Yoga Terms”, a publication from the BWY (Davis, 1983), and Sanskrit Yoga terms used on the BWY web-site (2009), as this study collects data from the members of the BWY.*

Amaravati Buddhist Monastery – Theravada Buddhism monastery in Hertfordshire UK.

Ashtanga-Yoga, or Eight Limbs of Yoga by Patanjali

1. Yama (the laws of life),
2. Niyama ( the rules for living),
3. Asana (posture),
4. Pranayama (breath control),
5. Pratyahara (withdrawal of senses),
6. Dharana (concentration),
7. Dhyana (meditation),
8. Samadhi ( the settled state of mind).

CAM – Complementary and Alternative Medicine.

Chakra – Energy centre. Hatha Yoga normally counts seven along the spine.

DCT – A tutor for The BWY Diploma Teacher Training Course.

Gita – The Bhagavad-Gita – One of the main texts in Classical Yoga

GP – A General Practitioner.

Guru – A charismatic yogi who has decided to live by yoga and leads a group of followers.

Hatha Yoga – It usually means postural and some breathing practices.

HYP -- Hatha-Yoga-Pradipika - one of the main texts in Hatha Yoga

Iyengar Yoga – An internationally well known yoga school led by B.K.S. Iyengar.

Kripalu Yoga – The guru is Amrit Desai in the USA. It uses a fluid movement.

MPY - Modern Postural Yoga.

Participant – Who co-operates by taking part in interviews in this study.

Patanjali’s Yoga Sutra (PYS) – A Classical yoga text, and often regarded as the most important text by many modern practitioners.

Raja Yoga – concentration and meditation practice originating from Patanjali’s text. Usually it includes Pratyahara, Dharana, Dhyana and Samadhi.

Savasana – Corpse posture.

The BWY - The British Wheel of Yoga. It officially represents the British Yoga population.

The BWY Diploma teacher training course – People variously refer it as Diploma course, Diploma training, teacher training course etc.

# 1. Introduction

## *Introduction*

This thesis is the result of my curiosity about what makes life meaningful for people in modern society. Yoga participants were chosen as the research subject group because I happen to have been practicing yoga since 1974, first in Japan, and then in the UK. Although yoga has recently become very fashionable and popular, the traditional understanding of yoga has been surrounded by tales of mysterious powers and magical experiences. The construction of modern forms of acceptable yoga for the West is relatively new. The move was started by Vivekananda in 1896 (18<sup>th</sup> impression, 1982), and was given impetus by William James who was then a professor of psychology and philosophy at Harvard University. He wrote,

*“Yoga means the experimental union of the individual with the divine. It is based on persevering exercise; and the diet, posture, breathing, intellectual concentration, and moral discipline vary slightly in the different systems which teach it. The yogi, or disciple, who has by these means overcome the obscurations of his lower nature sufficiently, enters into the condition termed Samadhi, ‘and comes face to face with the facts which no instinct or reason can ever know.’ (James, 190, p. 400, the quotation is from Vivekananda, 1896)”*

## *Research questions*

The main research question in this thesis is **“What is the nature of ‘the self’ modern yoga practitioners cultivate?”**

Yoga practitioners are people who practice some form of yoga regularly. After discussions with my supervisors, I postulated from my past studies that yoga practitioners create their own meaningful ‘self’ through their practice of yoga. In order to find an answer more easily, it was suggested to me that this rather philosophical question was divided into three smaller and answerable questions. These are:

- (1). How does yoga practice influence yoga practitioners’ health and well-being?
- (2). How does yoga practice influence the management of life crises?
- (3). How does yoga practice influence yoga practitioners’ sense of self?

The definition of the core concept ‘the self’ is too complicated and fuzzy to define simply, as it has been idealized or conceptualized differently throughout yoga history, and across diverse literature. In this study, I investigated how the participants expressed

it as a sense of ‘the self’, and explored the outcome of my findings to answer the research question.

In this study, ‘**one’s sense of self**’ belongs to everyday consciousness, whereas ‘**the self**’ has a more ontological significance.

### ***The reasons for this research***

I have been practicing yoga with the British Wheel of Yoga trained teachers for almost 19 years now and I have regular contact with some of their practitioners. I have noticed that after practicing yoga for some time, practitioners begin to speak of ‘yoga philosophy’ and ‘meditation’. Although many yoga practitioners read yoga books by various authors, their ideals of ‘the goal’ of yoga seemed quite diverse. It seemed that the idea of ‘the self’ they discussed was eclectic and differed from practitioner to practitioner although it seemed to have a positive influence on their lives and lifestyles. I found it fascinating that yoga could influence and change people, sometimes to a great extent.

This has led me to try to discover what they find of interest in the practice, why they embark on the journey of self-discovery, how they begin their journey, what the factors involved in the practice are, and where they want to go, by listening to their lived experiences.

### ***Background to the research***

Since this study is founded on my personal interest, I need to establish my own relationship to it. As a starting point, I describe here how I started to practice yoga, how my relationship with yoga developed, and the reasons why I chose this research topic in yoga using hermeneutic phenomenology as my methodology. I therefore use the first person singular throughout this thesis.

When I first started yoga in 1974, I attended classes taught by Mr Masahiro Oki at the Oki Yoga school in Tokyo which later spread to the rest of the world as 'Buddhist yoga' or 'Oki yoga'. As I enjoyed learning it enormously, I felt better within myself.

I still remember the feeling of euphoria I had after three months of yoga practice. It seemed to me then that everything I was brought up with - Buddhism, meditation, traditional healing systems like shiatsu, arts, and literature - had deep roots in yoga. It seemed that yoga was offering me an enormous wealth of knowledge and an opportunity for personal growth. Then, I wished to try yoga work for mental health clients. At the time I was working as a nurse with psychiatric outpatients in a Tokyo rehabilitation institute which was newly built and funded by the Tokyo local government as a pioneering project. To my regret, after a brief trial with the staff, we decided not to go further, as it was premature. Yoga practice was, at the time, a very strange thing to do for most people.

In the 1960s and in the 1970s, practices in psychiatric treatment were rapidly changing: the practice of lobotomy had become a thing of the past, and ECT (Electro-Convulsive-Treatment) was becoming unpopular. In their place, there had been many new psychotropic drugs coming onto the market, as well as new psychotherapeutic treatments such as TA (Transactional Analysis) and group therapies (Bernes, 1971). Following the counter-culture, or anti-establishment movement, including the anti-psychiatry movement, the new wave in mental health was opening up locked doors, and giving patients back autonomy and independence (Laing, 1970). However, psychiatric drugs at that time were primitive in comparison to the drugs that are currently in use, and one leading psychiatrist said that they did not understand why the drugs worked, but that they were good enough to manage intolerable psychiatric symptoms. The reality was that many people who came out of the protective environment of hospitals quickly became unstable, or could not face the hard reality of the world, and failed. There were many ex-patients who committed suicide, or relapsed, and I felt that I was utterly powerless to understand or help them. After I left the job, the feeling of unfinished business haunted me.

Having practiced yoga for 2 years, I moved from Japan to England, feeling that there must be something more than what I knew then. My understanding of yoga at that time was based on the Japanese cultural foundation of Buddhism, and in particular on an esoteric sect of Shingonshū. Mr Oki's teachings were extremely eclectic and inclusive, ranging from macro-biotic diet and yoga therapy to the combined practice of martial arts. Although I had read several of his books on yoga, I did not realize the depth of what yoga practice involved. My choices of books at that time were Japanese classic literature, Chinese and Indian philosophy, and French literature and phenomenology. I did not think at the time that there could be something in common between these at a fundamental level.

I went back to practicing yoga more regularly in 1991 and took a BWY Diploma teacher training course. When I finished training, I felt the need to gain more in-depth knowledge of anatomy and physiology in connection with yoga practice. In 1993, I began the Yoga Biomedical Trust's yoga therapist training course. While I was studying the therapy course, I felt I should study biology and psychology - in particular, how we feel pain, or how we feel happy. I completed a BSc degree in Psychology and an MSc in Medical Anthropology. Medical Anthropology in particular helped me to understand that the ways in which we perceive pain and suffering are culturally shaped by the community in which we are born and raised.

As a result of my MSc dissertation on yoga therapy, I came to understand certain aspects of suffering, in particular that the body has a long and complicated history and that the yoga 'self' needs to be understood in the paradigm of the holistic unity of the body, mind and spirit.

In addition, I studied a module entitled *The Brain and Its Behaviour* at MSc level with the Open University, as 'Consciousness' or 'cognitive science' seemed relevant to my understanding and practice of yoga.

From 1999 to 2001, I was fortunate enough to be given an opportunity to teach yoga at a local NHS mental health resource centre for outpatients, which I successfully

established and expanded before handing it over to other yoga teachers. It was a moving as well as cathartic experience for me. I felt that I managed to empower the attendees and helped to make them feel at peace with themselves. Their radiant faces gave me the sense of satisfaction that I had not felt while I was working with mental health clients in Tokyo.

Over the years, I became fascinated by the ideologies and practice of yoga. Since I started studying yoga in 1991, I have been reading about various aspects of yoga, psychology, anthropology, sociology, Indian, Chinese and Japanese philosophy, phenomenology, cognitive science and Buddhism. I have come to realize that the study of yoga encompasses so many academic disciplines.

The last two decades have seen a great change in the social and cultural climate. For instance, qualitative methodologies have become accepted as a respectable approach in social science research (Denzin and Lincoln, 2003). Complementary and Alternative Medicine (CAM) in general have become more popular with the general public although CAM represents such a broad range of practices with so few similarities between them that Ursula Sharma (1995, p.1) comments that the efficacy of CAM has been and continues to be hotly debated. Some forms of CAM such as homeopathy have been the focus of controversy (Goldacre, 2009; Ernst *et al.*, 2006), and others like osteopathy and chiropractic became legally accepted and regulated in 1993 (Vincent and Furnham, 1998). ‘Which’ magazine’s consumer survey carried out in 2001 reports that yoga leads to more patient-satisfaction than any other CAM modality (Ernst *et al.*, 2006, p. 356). Despite the fact that Ernst *et al.* (ibid.) suggest that the methodological quality of many yoga studies is poor, yoga has become a part of therapeutic techniques in some parts of the NHS and Social Services, in mental health and community services (e.g. Woolery *et al.*, 2004; Kuei-Min *et al.*, 2007).

The popularity of yoga in the West has seen an exponential growth and an expansion of its practicing population (Strauss, 2004). At the same time, the practicing methods of yoga have been rapidly diversifying and the secularization of yoga’s teachings has become the global norm rather than the Hinduism-based religious doctrine (Newcombe,



2008). Articles and news about yoga invade the media everyday (Bellos, FT, 14<sup>th</sup> November 2004). The modern form of yoga, which has been commonly practiced in the West for the past 50 years, seems to have gone through transformation following the popular use of internet communication. Under such circumstances, it is not possible to estimate an accurate number of yoga practitioners in the UK. However, Germany estimated the yoga-practicing population at 4 million in 2002 (Strauss, 2005). In 2004, the yoga-practicing population in the UK was estimated at 2.5 million (Singleton and Byrne, 2008). In 2005, the yoga population in the USA was estimated at 16.5 million (Yamashita, 2009). Heelas (2006) carried out a fieldwork in a Yorkshire town, Kendal, and he found that yoga was the most popular holistic activity.

At a personal level, I do not belong to any particular school of yoga nor do I follow a guru. I am a member of the British Wheel of Yoga (BWY) and was qualified through their diploma teacher training course. The BWY is a secular umbrella organization which represents the majority of yoga teachers in Britain. Yoga contains such diverse elements in practice that, after much debate, the BWY became a part of the European Sports Council and Sport England in 1996.

### ***Limit of research scope and key methods***

My chief interest in this study is not in the area of yoga history or Sanskrit texts, but in the people who practice it and live by it in modern society. My research project will use the in-depth interviews of BWY practitioners. I also intend for this study to combine the diverse fields which I have studied, in the hope of shedding a new light on modern yoga practitioners' lived experience.

### ***Methodology***

Since the research question is an ontological question about the nature of 'the self', the approach I take is a philosophical one. Hermeneutic phenomenology used as the research methodology in this study is based on the works of Martin Heidegger (1962) and Maurice Merleau-Ponty (1962). In particular, the key ideas drawn from the former is *Dasein* (Being-in-the-world), and from the latter, *Embodiment*. I regard the two concepts of existential phenomenology to be vital in unlocking the phenomena of the

lived experiences of modern yoga practitioners and in finding the answer to the research question.

### ***Outline of each chapter***

This thesis consists of 7 chapters:

*Chapter one* is introductory.

*In chapter two*, I outlined an overall literature review on yoga. This chapter started with the received definition of yoga. Then an overview of yoga literature was followed by classified approaches by various disciplines. Following the literature review, I described the ways in which my study was unique and how it could contribute to the expansion of academic knowledge in yoga and health. I explored here the relationship between yoga and the self, and what studying it historically and in modern society involved. I also explored the relationship between yoga, Buddhism and the phenomenological theories of Heidegger and Merleau-Ponty. The sea change of Western social culture was the background of the current yoga boom. The rapid ‘Easternization of the West’ (Campbell, 2007) popularized yoga and Buddhism. In this section, I explored the close link between yoga, Buddhism and phenomenology and the ways in which they shared ideas of ‘the self’ and of ‘Being’, and the reasons why I needed phenomenological understanding for lived experience of yoga practitioners. Then, I outlined the past development of yoga and its legacy which still influenced its practitioners today, including the dimensions of modernity and the self, and the New Age Movement. With the New Age Movement, modern yoga made a giant leap forward as a popular physical practice fit for anyone.

I outlined the British Wheel of Yoga (BWY), whose members I interviewed as research participants. In all, I presented four models of the self for later discussions: Patanjali’s Eight Limbs of Yoga from the Classical Yoga perspective; the Hierarchy of Human Needs from the Humanistic Psychological perspective by Maslow; the Skill Acquisition model from the phenomenological approach by Dreyfus, and The Ten Oxherding Pictures of the Zen Buddhism model.

*In chapter three*, I explored various aspects of research methodology, and explained the reasons why I chose hermeneutic phenomenology for this study. Although my intention

to study the personal views of yoga practitioners had been constant, the journey to find the most suitable research method was not easy. I described and compared the various aspects of three methodologies: ethnography, Biographical Narrative Interpretive Methods (BNIM), and phenomenological methodologies. I then discussed the difference between descriptive phenomenology and hermeneutic phenomenology, and explained that I chose the hermeneutic phenomenology of Heidegger and Merleau-Ponty because of its existential and embodied understanding of the self.

*In chapter four*, firstly, I explained the methods in context and the design of the research process. This chapter described the issues relating to the chosen research methods, such as ethical issues, research design and the step-by-step process of data collection. Secondly, I presented an outline of the research group and their individual profiles. This chapter also explained the process of data analysis using hermeneutic phenomenology as its method. The analytical process resulted in six emergent themes: Health and Well-being, Management of Life Crises, Sense of Self and Yoga Development, CAMs and GPs, Relationships, and Spirituality. This chapter also outlined the research group, evaluated the use of the computer software programme ATLAS.ti, and discussed research trustworthiness and transparency for this study.

*In chapter five*, I explored the findings emerging from the data. I interpreted and analysed each emergent theme in depth and in relation to the research question concerning ‘the self’ of yoga practitioners, using the relevant narratives of participants (*exemplars*) and life stories (*paradigm cases*). The first theme, *Health and Well-being*, discussed stories of ill-health and recovery, life enhancement and the importance of the breath. The second theme, *Management of Life Crises*, was interpreted using the modified model of Maslow’s Hierarchy of Human Needs, and the progress of yoga learners. The third theme, *Sense of Self and Yoga Development*, was divided into seven stages by expanding Dreyfus’ Skill Acquisition model. Yoga practitioners began as novices, becoming semi-novices and eventually experts. Some of them then undertook various further study paths in yoga according to their own aspirations. After their journey, they seemed to develop a theory of life and of what yoga meant to them. Finally, some of them became super-experts, DCT (Diploma Course Tutors), and they

wished to pass on their yoga knowledge to the next generation of yoga teachers. The fourth theme was *CAMs and GPs*, where relationships between yoga, practitioners, GPs, the NHS and other CAM practices were explored and interpreted. The fifth theme was *Relationships*. This theme was divided into four categories: the relationship with the self, with the family, with the yoga community and with society at large. The sixth theme was *Spirituality*. This theme was considered from a pragmatic point of view and divided into four categories: (1) What ‘spirituality’ was for secular BWY members, (2) How it was expressed: awareness of the inner self, (3) How it was achieved: importance of embodiment and (4) How they learned it: transmission of yoga knowledge.

*In chapter six*, I further discussed the findings in relation to the research questions. The discussion and conclusion in this chapter formed the original contribution of my research. Firstly, the first research sub-question, yoga’s influence on health and well-being, was discussed. Through the practice of postures and breathing, practitioners developed a sense of empowerment in relation to their health and well-being and gained a sense of awareness of the body-mind. Secondly, yoga’s influence on the management of life crises was discussed. Using a modified form of Maslow’s Hierarchy of Human Needs model, I found that the participants interpreted and applied yoga techniques and yoga studies to mitigate the suffering and solve their various life crises. Thirdly, yoga’s influence on the sense of self was analysed. As shown in a paradigm case, a variety of yoga techniques could help practitioners to face the range of challenges in life and maintain strength and equanimity. After long term practice, the practitioner felt a sense of freedom and of peace.

The research question ‘the nature of the self for modern yoga practitioners’ was discussed from two perspectives: that of the embodied self, and that of the social self. The sense of the embodied self developed through attending proprioception and learning relaxation techniques during the practice of Modern Postural Yoga (MPY). The social self was related to the circumstances in which they practiced in modern society.

Through comparison to and contrast with the four models of ‘the self’ from literature, I articulated a critical appraisal of ‘the self’ in modern yoga practice. The benefit of yoga as a therapeutic technique in healthcare was discussed as ‘empowerment’.

Finally, I reflected on this study and commented on my original contribution to health study, as well as on its limitations and future research possibilities.

*Chapter seven* is a summary of this study.

This chapter came back to the research question “What is the nature of ‘the self’ yoga practitioners cultivate?”, and summarized the research as a whole.

## 2. Literature review

### 2.1. Introduction

In this chapter, I begin with the broadest definition of yoga. Then, I explore how modern yoga research has been progressing, so that I can state my research position and justify it. Next, I investigate the various aspects of yoga and ‘the self’, the ways in which modernity seeks ‘the self’, and phenomenology of Heidegger and Merleau-Ponty. Then, I trace how modern yoga developed on the back of the New Age Movement, the close links between yoga, Buddhism and phenomenology. In all, I present four models of self development across literature for later discussions: (1) Eight limbs of Patanjali’s Yoga Sutra; (2) Maslow’s ‘Hierarchy of Human Needs’; (3) Dreyfus’ Skill Acquisition model, and (4) The Ten Oxherding Pictures from Zen. And lastly, I trace the development of the British Wheel of Yoga up to the present day.

It is difficult to define what yoga is as the word yoga implies so many different things to each individual who takes any interest in the matter. The broadest definition is that **yoga is a system of technology for self-development**. Some typical examples are:

“The word yoga serves, in general, to designate any ascetic technique and any method of meditation.” (Eliade, 1969, p. 4) Eliade is one of the first western academics who spent an extended period of time in India (1928-31) to study and who practiced yoga at the University of Calcutta (ibid., p. xx). Eliade explains “Yoga ended by absorbing and incorporating all kinds of spiritual and mystical techniques, from the most elementary to the most complex... To become what it has been for many centuries – that is a pan-Indian corpus of spiritual techniques – yoga had to meet all the deepest needs of the Indian soul” (ibid., p. 359).

There have been other yoga practicing academics who wrote their PhD theses in aspects of yoga. For instance, Feuerstein wrote a thesis entitled “*Textural and semantic studies in classical yoga*” in 1974. He defines yoga as “a body of knowledge and technique that aimed at the transformation and transcendence of ordinary consciousness” (Feuerstein, 1998, p. 87).

Whicher’s thesis title was “*A study of Patanjali’s definition of yoga: uniting theory and practice in the Yoga-Sutra*” submitted in 1992. He defines yoga as “South Asian Indian

paths of spiritual emancipation, or self-transcendence that bring about a transmission of consciousness culminating in liberation from the confines of egoic (*sic*) identity or worldly existence.” (Whicher, 1998, p. 6)

In the BWY published booklet, Werner (1987, p. 4) defines yoga as “a system of training the mind and the whole personality of man by way of specialized techniques with the aim of eventually achieving a direct encounter with or knowledge of the ultimate reality.”

These are highly idealized theoretical definitions. They remain quite vague and, idealistic, and are not easily understood by ordinary people. While the above definitions are historically and polemically correct, the phenomenon of modern yoga practice in the West appears to be operating on an entirely different ethos. The new modern type of yoga practiced in the West is now termed **Modern Postural Yoga** (MPY) by the new breed of yoga researchers (e.g. De Michelis, 2004; Singleton, 2005).

In order to get a bird's eye view of what constitutes yoga, I will review some of the main yoga literature in the vast number of written works.

## **2.2. Classification of literature on yoga**

I firstly describe very briefly historical yoga texts. Secondly, I outline the research areas of modern yoga. Then, I will be able to establish where my study stands among the vast research literature.

### ***2.2.1 Historical literature of yoga***

I interviewed the BWY members for data collection, and I realize that it is important to acknowledge what they study as their yoga knowledge base. The choice of the Classical Yoga texts below and their classification are based on the syllabus that BWY teachers study. (The BWY diploma teacher training course syllabus is in appendices.)

The Classical Yoga texts of some Upanishads, Patanjali's Yoga Sutra, and the Bhagavad-Gita have been rich sources of academic investigation in various fields, and numerous publications have been made ever since Sanskrit was codified in

approximately the 4<sup>th</sup> century BC (Shearer, 1982). Among the Hatha Yoga texts of the Middle Ages, Hatha-Yoga-Pradipika (written around the 14<sup>th</sup> century), and Gheranda-Samhita (written around the late 17<sup>th</sup> Century) and some others are well-known (Feuerstein, 1998).

Yoga literature nowadays is written in various languages throughout the world as yoga is practiced globally. However, recent important academic studies have been written in English or translated into English for international readership (Strauss, 2004).

At the same time, yoga practice spread from India throughout the world by becoming a secular physical practice rather than a spiritual tradition (De Michelis, 2004). As yoga has become a global phenomenon, research into yoga has spread over hugely diverse disciplines. In the following, I will divide relevant modern yoga literature into major academic disciplines so that the scope of this study becomes clearer.

### ***2.2.2 Modern approaches to the study of yoga***

The modern yoga movement can be seen as a part of the New Age Movement (De Michelis, 2004; Campbell, 2007). As a researcher on the New Age Movement, Heelas (1996) says that modern yoga practices are more secular and its aims are more self-affirming and this-worldly. In this sense, research into modern yoga practice must be considered as a part of the social phenomenon of modernity. However, the approaches to yoga research vary widely. A quick survey on the internet in August 2009 indicated a considerable amount of research on the subject of 'yoga'. I limited the modern yoga research database between circa 1970 and 2009, where I could. 1970s was the time yoga started to establish its legitimacy in the West, and the BWY was founded and established around 1965-1970. Firstly, **ERSCO**, an academic search engine, showed there were *11,611* articles across various academic resources between 1973 and 2009. Within the ERSCO database, Academic Search Premier hit *3,824*; MEDLINE *1,309*; PsycINFO *1,035*; CINAHL *1,674*; British Nursing Index *53*; Business Source Complete *1,447* and Regional Business News *652*.

It clearly showed that health and psychology orientated areas indicated a large body of study, but a significant number of business oriented articles were shown too.

**JSTOR**, the scholarly journal archive online, which is smaller than ERSCO, indicated *919* research papers across diverse academic disciplines between 1970 and 2009.



Among them, religious study showed 398; philosophy 138; language and literature 136, art and art history 117 and education 112. Health, psychology and sociology indicated less than 10 cases each.

**ISI Web of Knowledge** indicated 1,822 articles between 1950 and 2009. The majority 1,756 articles were since 1970. In a discrete search, Science and Technology hit 1,466; Art and Humanities 1,136, and Social Sciences 805.

**The British Medical Journal** archive showed there were 159 yoga articles between 1970 and 2009. **The Lancet**, a medical journal, suggested that there were 67 since 1973 to 2009.

In addition, **Google advanced scholar search**, which included more popular journals relating subjects such as health and sport, showed a total of 61,400 yoga articles between 1970 and 2009. Among the discrete subject areas, social sciences, art and humanities prominently indicated 25,300, Medicine and pharmacy indicated 10,200.

There are also two useful recent publications. One is “*Yoga: An annotated Bibliography of Works in English, 1980-2005*” (Callahan, 2007), which covers 2490 titles including 301 dissertations and theses. Another is “*Yoga: Medical Dictionary, Bibliography & Annotated Research Guide to Internet References*” (Parker and Parker, 2003), which covers extensive yoga related medical internet links.

From the above publication numbers, I conclude that the overall trends are: (1) Yoga research has been carried out in diverse disciplines (2) Social Sciences and humanities, including religion and philosophy, and medicine and health orientated studies dominate the body of modern yoga research articles. For my study, the latter’s health orientated research is relevant.

Next, as my study area is in health, I outline the unique features of **research in health**. Here, I divide them into five main categories:

**2.2.2.1 Scientific and experimental approaches, which use mainly quantitative methodologies.** Examples include research papers on the analysis of brain waves or brain chemicals using CATs, MRI and physiological explanations.

e.g. Vera, F. M., Manzanque J. M., *et al.* (2009) Subjective Sleep Quality and hormonal modulation in long-term yoga practitioners. *Biological Psychology*. vol. 81, no. 3 pp. 164-168.

#### ***2.2.2.2 Medical approaches which have recently been proliferating mainly use quantitative approaches.***

There have also been a huge number of research publications about practical applications of yoga techniques in treating people. Research areas include clinical applications in obstetrics, mental health, sport medicine, cardiac treatment, preventative and rehabilitative therapy and so forth.

e.g. McElroy-Cox, C. (2009) Alternative approaches to Epilepsy treatment, *Current Neurology And Neuroscience Reports*. vol. 9, no. 4, pp. 313-318.

#### ***2.2.2.3 Yoga as a Complementary and Alternative Medicine (CAM):***

Over the past two decades, there have been many research papers on the efficacy of yoga as a CAM, which reflects the increasing popularity of yoga among the public.

e.g. Dittmann, K. A. and Freedman, M. R. (2009) Body awareness, eating attitudes, and spiritual beliefs of women practicing yoga, *Eating Disorders*, vol. 17, no. 4, pp. 273-92.

#### ***2.2.2.4 Psychological study of yoga and meditation:***

Psychotherapeutic study has gained momentum since the 1970s when humanistic and transpersonal psychology started to grow as an academic discipline of psychology.

e.g. Schure, M. B. and Christopher, J. *et al.* (2008) Mind-Body Medicine and the Art of Self-Care: Teaching Mindfulness to Counselling Students Through Yoga, Meditation, and Qigong. *Journal of Counselling & Development*. vol. 86, no. 1, pp. 47-56.

#### ***2.2.2.5 Numerous textbooks written by yoga gurus and Hindu academics.***

e.g. Iyengar, B. K. S. (1988) *Yoga Vrksa: The Tree of Yoga*. Oxford: Fine Line Books.

There are different approaches to modern understanding of yoga and yoga practice.

There are roughly three camps. They are:

- a) Theoretical/philosophical publications by Western academics.
- b) Modern scientific and medical understanding of yoga and meditation.

c) Modern yoga studies by yoga practicing academics starting in the 1990s. This trend came to the fore when yoga became a global phenomenon following a rapid expansion of information technology.

It is in this last approach to the study of yoga that my research takes place.

Next, I explore examples of the expanding study of modern yoga.

### ***2.2.3 Modern yoga studies***

It has been pointed out that the current yoga boom is a multinational and cosmopolitan phenomenon, modern yoga practice is often not rooted in Indian spiritual tradition but often a commercial or a lifestyle choice with huge money-making potential (Alter, 2004; McKean, 1996). The cultural features of modern yoga practice are unique and original compared to those of a quiet pursuit of the pre-mass-media era (Strauss, 2000; 2004; 2005; 2008).

Strauss's study involved Sivananda global communities from India, Switzerland, the United States and Germany, and analyzed how the global yoga community was organized. In Britain, Heelas (1996; 2005; 2006) researched the New Age Movement including yoga, and found that meaningfulness in the self became more important than traditional values such as religion. In India, Alter (2004; 2008) carried out an ethnographic study in modern practices of yoga and on how narratives of yoga were changing their ideology to fit in with modern popular science and medicine.

From a sociological approach, Campbell (2007) studied how the West lost its religious beliefs through the development of science and capitalism, resulting in disenchantment with the world. He explained that the New Age Movement highlighted this religious secularization and 'self-empowerment' spirituality. Campbell (2007, p. 374) wrote, "a decline that created a cultural vacuum that only an Eastern outlook would be able to fill." He coined it 'the Yogaization of the West'.

As a part of newly emerged yoga practicing academics, Singleton and Byrne (2008) edited "*Yoga in the Modern World: Contemporary Perspectives*". This new publication is a collection of studies on the modern practice of yoga, which includes its history and forms, authenticity, and understanding of its practice from various aspects.

Other studies concerning modern society and its nature have been conducted in the fields of psychology, anthropology and sociology. These publications form the background reading for understanding modern yoga practice. For instance, Pepper (1991) *Communes and the Green Vision*, looked at the ethos and practices of various new age groups. Anthropologist Puttick (1997) conducted an ethnographic study with the Rajineesh Osho movement, mainly in the USA. Others investigated the relationship between modernity and religion, or what spirituality meant to the people who lived in the modern world (Tacey, 2004). The ideas about modernity, spirituality, the self and the influence of Eastern culture are complicated, the above literature helps to understand the background of ‘the self’ modern British yoga practitioners cultivate.

#### ***2.2.4 Justification of this study***

The reasons why this research is unique, and will contribute to future study concerning modern yoga practice are as follows:

Literature survey concerning research into yoga practice and yoga practitioners was conducted on <http://www.theses.com>. The search was initially carried out from the 1980s to 2008. However, the list was short and all the theses on record were only 22 titles in the UK concerning any aspect of yoga. The majority of studies have either been carried out in theoretically based disciplines such as Indian philosophy, religious studies and history or taken scientific approaches.

Among the theses, “*Modern Yoga: transmission of theory and practice*” by De Michelis, is relevant to my research. Her research was carried out in the theology department of Cambridge University, and was submitted in 2001. Her study involved Iyengar Yoga practices. She coined modern yoga practice as MPY (Modern Postural Yoga), and her book based on the thesis “*a history of modern yoga*” was published in 2004. Another thesis which gave me some insight into modern yoga practice was “*Sahaja Yoga: a qualitative sociological study of a new religious movement*” authored by Coney, J. M. in 1996 at the University of London.

Since 2003, there have been two further somewhat relevant theses written. The first one was “*An exploration of the experience of individuals choosing yoga or exercise in a*

*continuous cardiac rehabilitation programme*” written by Byatt, K. at Liverpool John Moore University in 2004. The research focused on Cardiac rehabilitation programmes and health issues using both quantitative methodology and interviews. Another thesis that was relevant to my study was “*Social History of Yoga and Ayurveda in Britain 1950 – 1995*” by Newcombe, S. (2008) in the faculty of History at Cambridge University. In it, she studied the history of the BWY up to 1995, which provides me with background knowledge about the development of the BWY from its inception to the pre-globalization era. Since then, the use of the Internet and of other communication tools has become an important part of everyday life for an increasing number of the global yoga population.

The most important aspect of my research is with the British Wheel of Yoga, in a contemporary, secular and social sphere of yoga practice through the practitioners’ own lived experiences using hermeneutic phenomenology as the methodology. There have not been any studies of modern yoga practitioners with this qualitative methodology in the UK. I have also been informed by a BWY Officer at their central office that there has never been any in-depth social science research into the community of the British Wheel of Yoga (BWY), which is now the governing organization for British yoga practitioners and represents the majority of British yoga practitioners.

As yoga has become increasingly popular, and media coverage of yoga has become ubiquitous, I believe that my study of its practitioners’ lived experiences and the way in which they find ‘the self’ is not only meaningful but also useful for future study in wider social sciences and health related disciplines.

### **2.3. Yoga and the self**

In order to put current yoga communities in perspective, I will describe where and how yoga history developed and its legacy, which still influences the people with whom I study. When a member of the BWY wants to learn more about yoga, he/she is encouraged to take its diploma teacher training course.

### ***2.3.1 The BWY diploma teacher training course syllabus, and Patanjali's Eight Limbs of Yoga model***

During the course of teacher training, they are required to study the basic yoga texts by the syllabus. Then, they absorb the contents of what they are presented with as yoga philosophy. It is important to note that the various texts expound on the goal of yoga, often referred to as 'transcendence', 'liberation', 'the ultimate reality', 'the truth' and 'The Self' in various contexts by different translators and commentators.

Although the meaning of these words in the texts remains controversial, the goal of yoga can only be found inside the individual seekers, and yoga has been regarded as a system of practice for this purpose (e.g. Eliade, 1969).

Since yoga was introduced to the general public after the Second World War, people's attitude to yoga in the UK has changed considerably. In order to understand 'the self' of modern yoga practitioners, a history of yoga and its key ideas of 'the self' are outlined below:

"The tradition of yoga is as complex as it is ancient," said Feuerstein (1989, p. xx) and Eliade called it 'a living fossil' (1969, p. 361). As the history of yoga goes back approximately 3 000 years, the way people understand and practise yoga has undergone many changes. I divide **yoga tradition** into roughly three relevant eras for this study, following Werner's (1987, a BWY publication) example.

#### **(1), Classical Yoga: 100 BC – 500 AD.**

The Goal: the-other-worldly (Weber, 1991, original work published in 1922) and the method is world-rejecting (Bruce, 1996). The transcendent state is the purified ultimate Self, and the method required to renounce the world. Classical Yoga has a close relationship with Samkhya philosophy and its cosmology (Purusha and Prakriti or the essence and the matter). The most well-known textbook is Patanjali's Yoga Sutra, and its emphasis is on meditation in progressive stages. Yoga Sutra is taught as one of the main textbooks in the yoga teacher's diploma course

(2), Hatha/Tantric Yoga: 500 – 1300 AD.

The Goal: the-other-worldly and the method is world-affirming.

Hatha Yoga is closely related to Hinduism, with the worship of the Gods Shiva and Shakti. Its major texts, Hatha-Yoga-Pradipika and Gheranda-Samhita, emphasize bodily transcendence. This yoga uses postures and breath control (pranayama) extensively. Hatha Yoga developed sophisticated yogic models of the body and the mind. Most publicly organized yoga classes teach secular forms of Hatha Yoga techniques (Singleton, 2008).

(3), Modern Yoga: 1900 AD – to the present.

The Goal is this-worldly and the method is world-affirming.

Yoga schools are organized in global networks with jet setting gurus, and they tend to have large-scale ashrams and affiliated faculties such as research centres. Printing materials within organizations and e-communication for the members seem extensive. Characterized by Green ideologies-eco-yoga, mass-participation, aligning yoga practice with modern scientific and medical explanation, the cosmology of yoga is moving from Hinduism to more secular, health orientation (Strauss, 2004; De Michelis, 2004). But, many practitioners appear to be ambiguous about their own tenets of ‘Yoga philosophy’ or ‘The goal of yoga practice’ (Newcombe, 2008).

It is important to emphasise that Indian philosophical history is very different from the western equivalent before we start thinking about how yoga is applicable to Westerners’ lives. Eliade (1969) explains that Indian philosophy fundamentally believes that *the world is constructed inside a man’s mind*, and thus seeks ‘the universal truth’ internally through meditation using yoga technologies. For that philosophy, the world is not ‘out there’, nor is ‘man a part of the natural world’, but *‘the world is within us’*.

For yoga practitioners, Patanjali’s Yoga Sutra maps out a progressive stage model of yoga practice. I outline the so-called ‘the eight limbs of yoga’ it expounds, as the first of four models of the self in this chapter.

The teachings of **Patanjali's Yoga Sutras** range from personal moral codes, hygiene and diet, to social behavior, methods of body maintenance using sequences of movements, breathing control, cultivation of psychological states through concentration and meditation, and beyond.

Chapter 1, "*The settled mind*" - in particular, the first four verses - crystallizes Patanjali's entire teachings: Yoga is the settling of the mind into silence, and only when the mind is silent can we realize our true nature, the effortless Being of the Self (Shearer, 1982).

In chapter two, Patanjali explains clearly about what he calls "*The Eight Limbs of Yoga*" the path of Yogic progress/maturation in eight stages. These limbs are interrelated and must be simultaneously deepened by Yoga practitioners. The following translation and some of the explanation of Sanskrit words are drawn from Shearer (1982).

- (1) *Yama* (the law of life) sums up the qualities and the inherent characteristics of life. It consists of five restrictions upon behaviour: non-violence in action and speech, truthfulness in thought, action and speech, non-stealing, pure living, and non-greed or attachment.
- (2) *Niyama* (the rules for living) applies principles to the individual's life. They are five: simplicity, contentment, self-discipline, learning, and self-surrender to Ishvara (god).
- (3) *Asana* (the postures) are physical exercises which strengthen and rejuvenate the body, releasing chronic muscular tension and freeing energy.
- (4) *Pranayama* (breathing exercises) is regarded as progressive control of breathing and its refinement into calmness. When the breathing is calm, the mind automatically becomes more settled.
- (5) *Pratyahara* means withdrawal of the senses from sense objects. As the mind begins to settle, attention moves inwards, no longer distracted by the outside world.
- (6) *Dharana* (steadiness of mind) means focusing the mind on a particular sphere or object in a directed type of awareness.
- (7) *Dhyana* (meditation, absorption) arises when meditation stretches continuously like a thread. This is the process of the mind's activity becoming increasingly refined and subtler.



(8) *Samadhi* (the settled mind) is reached when even the continuous absorbed meditation is transcended, and is the most delicate state of awareness.

It is the settling down of the mind at the beginning of the Yoga Sutra, which synthesizes all the limbs of yoga. From the early stages of Samadhi, senses become calmer and more peaceful and the body is trained to be comfortable in meditation. Thus, life in yoga meant to be healthier in body, calmer, clearer in mind, and more harmonious and responsible in living. These preparatory states in Hatha Yoga (Asana and Pranayama) are conducive to the later stages for Samadhi. Deepening of meditation leads to furthering one's inner journey. Eventually the meditation is pure enough to experience the stillness of the Self. The eight limbs are not necessarily progressive stages but simultaneously deepening, although a beginner is only able to begin from the earlier stages.

### ***2.3.2 The various ideas about 'the self' in yoga***

As the central idea of my research is 'the nature of the self yoga practitioners cultivate', I now review the ideas about 'the self' in yoga and Western understanding of the self.

In Classical Yoga, the resolution of subjectivity and objectivity manifests at the conscious level during concentration and meditation. Morley (2001) says Yoga can unite them through calming breath and awareness – focusing, observing and shifting intentionality in a Husserlian transcendental manner. According to Patanjali's Yoga-Sutra, the body is to be under control and to be a non-obstacle to mental activity. Patanjali expounds that the 'sacred Self' is to be found in the depth of the mind through meditation (Eliade, 1969). On the other hand, Hatha Yoga has a range of sophisticated techniques to control the body mechanism and breathing – both are aimed to control and maximise the function of the body and the mind, including the autonomic body function and subconscious mind, in order to transform the secular self into the sacred bodily-transcendental self (Feuerstein, 1989).

However, Modern Yoga practice aims to create the beautiful ideals of the body, and an imagined state of illusive 'well-being' (Strauss, 2005). Its goal is quite different from either Classical Yoga or Hatha Yoga. Borrowing Giddens' (1991) words, it tries to fill the

gap/deficiency in bodily health, in psychological satisfaction and in social fulfilment.

Narratives of yoga practice vary greatly according to what they value in yoga. The figure below illustrates the main differences between the traditions, and these differences are important to unlock the narratives of modern yoga practitioners.

**Figure 1: Ideas about “*Body & Mind*” in Yoga**

Cosmology	The body	The mind	Transcendence	Social/Cultural
Classical Yoga  Purified self, based on the dualism of the sacred and the profane (Eliade)	Calm, steady, comfortable body, under control.	No sensory perception, concentration & meditation.	Through focusing the mind  Samadhi.  Other-worldly	Sacred Path in Guru/Cheala in ashram.  World-rejecting
Hatha Yoga  Ecstasy & transformation through bodily transcendence. multiple layers of the body and the mind	Sophisticated techniques in postures & breathing.  The subtle body.  Control of autonomic system.	Mind control & psychic development.  The unconscious mind model.	Perfecting the body & psychic energy. Super-natural powers. The union of bodily gods of Kundalini-shakti.  Other-worldly	Tantric & Hinduism.  Gods Shiva & Shakti, and guru worship.  World-affirming
Modern Yoga  Enhancement of health, well-being & lifestyle	The ideals of beautiful bodies.  Bio-Medico-Media oriented	New narratives of secular ‘spirituality’	‘Happiness’, ‘Well-being’, ‘Health’, ‘Relaxation’.  Empowerment  This-worldly	Secular  Global community, Mass participation.  World-affirming

Modern Postural Yoga (MPY) practice is mostly centred on the ideas of Hatha Yoga practice to various degrees (De Michelis, 2004).

### ***2.3.3 Some key features of modern yoga***

In order to unite Eastern yogic practices with Western culture, outlining some key concepts may be useful. **Self perception** has many dimensions which include a social/cultural self, a cognitive self, and a bodily self. The yogic bodily self in Hatha Yoga is rather complex; it explains that there are two bodily gods inside the body to be united in order to transcend and reach the higher self. However, according to the original theory, Hatha Yoga is perfecting, controlling and elevating the unconscious bodily functions, awaking unreachable parts of the

body by extra-ordinary means, which is quite an alien idea to most Westerners (Worthington, 1982). However, on the back of **the New Age Movement**, a modern approach to yoga was born (Smith & Smith, 1986). Heimbeck (in Smith & Smith, 1986, p. xiii) describes, “*By venturing westward, yoga has found itself immersed in a powerful new matrix of transformation*” as a contemporary western yoga.

By exploring practitioners’ narratives of lived experience with their own yoga practices, I will try to understand how they absorbed their yoga ‘ideologies’ and fit them into their lifestyles. With yoga practitioners who are beginners, their understanding of yoga practice is usually associated with **stretch and relaxation** (Singleton, 2005). Although relaxation was said by Patanjali to be necessary prior to meditation practice, and by Gheranda Samhita to destroy fatigue and quieten the agitation of the mind (Hewitt, 1991), this modern aspect of understanding yoga does not share the same purpose. Relaxation for yoga class students largely means that they go home relaxed, so that they can cope with their stressful life better. Singleton (2005) explains that it derives from techniques of proprioceptive relaxation developed in 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> century Europe and North America. These relaxation techniques with their de-stressing benefits are now embraced by the BWY, and taught in their foundation course syllabus (BWY web-site, 2004). The person who propagated relaxation techniques was Edmund Jacobson (1938; 1977). Singleton (2005) argues that the progressive muscular relaxation technique was established well before yoga became popular in the West in 1950-1960. Relaxation technique in Modern Postural Yoga (MPY) was a modern invention for western practitioners, but eventually it became popular throughout the world.

#### ***2.3.4 The range of other alternative life choices***

In crises, people draw support according to the nature of their difficulties, their beliefs, circumstances, affinities with certain ways of thinking and availability of choices. For instance, when a person’s health is threatened by low back pain, they may seek orthodox medical treatments as well as alternative/complementary medicines. In the cases of health problems, people seek help from the ever expanding range of medical, pharmaceutical and surgical technologies when and if the particular treatment in need is available. In addition, seeking a Complementary and Alternative Medicine (CAM) has become one of their

options. Yoga can be one of these choices available if a suitable form of yoga is accessible to the person. It may help to reduce pain and improve mobility, or help to change lifestyle, or provide contact with other supportive sufferers. What is less likely to happen to most people is that they just remain passive and leave treatment to their GP. Bivins (2007) asserts that in modern society, practising pluralism in any area of life has become the norm.

In health crises, most people nowadays try plural remedies (Fulder, 1996; Graham, 1999; Heelas, 2006), and yoga is one of them. The question which arises is why many people choose yoga out of all the other alternative practices. Out of a huge range of yoga schools, availability, accessibility and personal suitability play important parts in starting and discontinuing yoga practice.

## **2.4. Modernity and the self**

As ‘the self’ in question is concerned with modern yoga practice. So, I will consider the relationship between *modernity* and *yoga*.

### **2.4.1 Modernity and yoga**

Living in a modern society means that there are constant challenges to the members socially and personally. Modernity offers a multitude of alternative choices in lifestyles. For increasing numbers of people in Britain, it seems that yoga has appeared to provide a way to express their ideals by combining spirituality and embodiment. As Giddens (1991) postulates, the feeling of meaninglessness in life becomes a fundamental problem for individuals in circumstances of late modernity. He wrote that in order to live a full and satisfactory life, one needed a sense of the moral resources. Yoga seems to provide his ‘reflexive project of the self’ (Giddens, 1991, p. 9) to generate spirituality, bodily mastery and meaningfulness for practicing individuals.

Eliade (1969) wrote that modern western philosophy tried to explain the basic human conditions of being situated by temporality and historicity. 40 years after Eliade made the comment, yoga practice attracts millions (Singleton and Byrne, 2008). What is so important to understand in the modern practice of yoga is that it reflects the zeitgeist of the modern British society in 21<sup>st</sup> century. The theories and practice of yoga can only

exist in the cultural condition of place and time in which yoga practitioners live. Yoga ideology and its various forms of practice are far from new, but how modern British practitioners practice yoga in their daily lives and how they relate to the theory have very unique features.

Descartes (1912, original work published in 1637) wrote about the so-called mind body dichotomy in relation to the existence of God, and he did not take into account the systemic entity of the mind-body. Against Descartes' idea, Heidegger (1962, p. 2) said, "*Being is always the Being of entity*". Against the convention of Western thinking, i.e. the dichotomy of objectivity and subjectivity, Heidegger postulated the construct '*Dasein* (being-in-the-world)' which is a historically situated existence, and which is aware of itself as existing in a finite spatio-temporal world.

## **2.5. Outline of phenomenological approach**

Although phenomenology itself has a long history, the founder of modern phenomenology was the German philosopher Edmund Husserl (1859-1938), who made a critical analysis of the European academic tradition of their objective knowledge and the positivist approach to science in 1936 (Benner, 1994; Hitzler and Eberle, 2004). The paradigm assumptions of the phenomenological approach for research are based on the philosophical assumptions founded notably by Husserl, Heidegger and others. Its approach uses data collecting methods similar to other narrative studies such as BNIM, but the process of data analysis is uniquely different.

Von Eckartsberg (1998) explains, in **Husserlian** phenomenological research, that - descriptions are usually obtained through transcribed personal interviews and the researcher's own accounts. Phenomenological analysis is carried out through the researcher's bracketing of presupposition (*époché*). By reflecting on meaning, the researcher is able to achieve '*phenomenological reduction*'. A further aim is *eidetic reduction* which involves a method of imaginatively exploring the possible variations and limits of the phenomena to find the essence or the truth of the structures of consciousness.

**Heidegger** (1962), who followed Husserl and expanded the theory, also explained,

*“The expression ‘phenomenology’ signifies primarily a methodological conception. This expression does not characterize the what of the objects of philosophical research as subject-matter, but rather the how of that research.” (1962, p. 50)*

Supplementing Heidegger’s idea, **Merleau-Ponty** (1962) focused on the ‘zero point’ of the body, as the pre-categorical ground, and on uniting subjectivity and objectivity. He (1962, p. 433) wrote,

*“The solution to all problems of transcendence is to be sought in the thickness of the pre-objective present, in which we find our bodily being, our social being, and the pre-existence of the world”.*

Merleau-Ponty (1962) emphasized that phenomenology is about our raw experience of being alive before we start using language to cognize the world. Phenomenology has been developed as a philosophical discipline, and yoga is a practice rooted in philosophy and religiously grounded in history.

I had always regarded phenomenology to be a philosophical approach, and could not use it as an analytical tool. So, it was a discovery to find phenomenology to be an analytical method in the search for the meaning of life in narratives.

Asp and Fasgerberg (2005) explain that, from a life-world perspective, the philosophical idea concerning the lived body (Merleau-Ponty, 1962) is consistent with presented assumptions of the human being in caring sciences, as the idea of the lived body describes a human being undergoing an experience (Bergman and Norlander, 2005). Merleau-Ponty writes (1962, p. 84) that the body is regarded as an indivisible, ambiguous existence of the subject-object; a ‘fusion of soul and body’. Although this approach appears similar to discourse analysis and narrative inquiry, it has a particularly radical change of emphasis, as it is oriented towards analyzing the ‘essence’ of conscious experience by locating and interpreting within the personal experience, expressed in a narrative.

I will next look into some of the key concepts of phenomenology.

### ***2.5.1 Phenomenology and its key concepts for this study***

What is Phenomenology?

Heidegger (1962, p. 58) defines it as, ‘To the things themselves.’

Merleau-Ponty defines it as “Phenomenology is a study of essences” (1962, p. vii), “We witness every minute the miracle of related experiences, and yet nobody knows better than we do how this miracle is worked, for we are ourselves this network of relationships” (1962, p. xx), “The unfinished nature of phenomenology and the inchoative atmosphere which has surrounded it are not to be taken as a sign of failure, they were inevitable because phenomenology’s task was to reveal the mystery of the world and of reason” (ibid. p. xxi).

Following the above definitions, phenomenology can be broadly defined as **a study of direct experience of life** in the world.

With this spirit of phenomenology, I will discuss some major phenomenological concepts of Heidegger and Merleau-Ponty, which are relevant to this study.

#### ***2.5.1.1 Heidegger’s phenomenology***

In Heideggerian phenomenology, the central key concept is **Dasein** or **Being-in-the-world**. Van Manen (1990, p. 176) explains concisely that “Dasein is a Heideggerian term which refers to that entity or aspect of our humanness which is capable of wondering about its own existence and inquiring into its own being.” Dreyfus (1991, p. xi) simply translates it as Being-human. Watts (2001, p. 25) explains that Heidegger’s *Being and Time* is an analysis of our way of Being and an inquiry into the meaning of Being.

For Heidegger (1962), **Being** with an uppercase ‘B’ is the foundation of his phenomenology, as opposed to ‘being’ with a lowercase ‘b’, which means simply existing. Van Manen (1990) explains it as Being is a fundamental term of the human science research process itself. Watts (2001) explains that Dasein is translated into English as ‘Being there’ or ‘there Being’, and the use of ‘there’ refers to the world for Heidegger in this context. So, Being means it exists as being a part of the world and with a capacity for understanding existence. In this way, Heidegger describes this mode

of existence as '**Being-in-the-world**', meaning the world and Dasein as an indivisible unity.

We are surrounded by the totality of the things which are at hand to use for a purpose, as Heidegger uses the famous analogy of the Hammer-Thing (1962, p. 98). Heidegger uses the word 'circumspection' to describe the practical environment full of 'equipment' that enables us to carry on everyday life without thinking deeply. These tools and materials which are **ready-at-hand** to be used for a purpose are called '**equipment totality**'. However, when something goes wrong and malfunctions, it becomes conspicuous, and we suddenly become aware of its un-usability (1962, pp. 102-5).

Heidegger (1962, p. 116) emphasises that our fundamental *involvement* with the world, that practical materials and personal concerns are inseparably interconnected, and only when it malfunctions, or being lost, we become acutely aware of its un-usefulness.

I believe that this principle also applies to non-concrete matters such as our health, friendship, family relationships and social conditions. For example, when we become ill or incapacitated, we suddenly feel the loss of bodily function and usefulness to others.

Heidegger asks "*who* is it that Dasein is in its everydayness?" and his answer is not the 'I myself', but '**Being-with-others**' (1962, pp. 149-59), and this aspect of our existence is discussed in a broader phenomenal domain of everyday Dasein. That is our fundamental feature of Being is with other people, i.e. with '*the-other*' and '*with-world*'. In this *Being-with*, we are able to understand and relate to others.

**Das Man** is translated as *the 'they'* by Macquarrie and Robinson (Heidegger, 1962, p. 164), but Dreyfus (1991, p. 143) translates it as '*the one*', and he says '*das Man*' is one of most basic and important ideas of Heidegger. Heidegger says "The self of everyday Dasein is the *they-self*, which we distinguish from the authentic Self (1962, p. 167)." Watts (2001) explains that we live most of the time in a constant state of *inauthenticity*, and this mode of living is characterized by a lack of self-awareness as we are absorbed in the everyday social life with others. The mode of *das Man* is contrasted with the



mode of authenticity. Heidegger says of *Das Man* “*This very state of Being, in its everyday kind of Being, is what proximally misses itself and covers itself up...Authentic Being.* (1962, p. 168)” Thus Heidegger contrasts everyday mode of living ‘*das Man*’ with the ideal mode of ‘*Authentic Being*’. Throughout Heidegger’s writing, there is an undercurrent of **a sense of wonder** towards life, of being alive, and opportunities it provides for us of those moments of the truth that change us. He writes, “*Being is the transcendence pure and simple* (1962, p. 62).” The more we live our lives and are absorbed in everyday matters which give us our place in society, the more we lose the sense of wonder of Being. Kotou (2002) explains that Heidegger was a theology student in his youth before he had several heart attacks at 20. As a result, he switched his study to philosophy, as he had to give up becoming a priest.. Around this time, he went through existential crises of fear of death and despair. But Heidegger talks about his experiences as if he was being struck by lightning. He describes that he experienced suddenly becoming aware of Being with a sense of wonder, the magical nature of existence, and Being surrounded by others. Heidegger calls this awakening experience ‘**Ereignis**’ (Kotou, 2002; Watts, 2001; Dreyfus, 1991) and *Ereignis* is translated as ‘event’ by Macquarri and Robinson (Heidegger, 1962). Dreyfus (1991) describes it as things coming into themselves by belonging together. Watts (2001, p. 73) says Ereignis is “*the spontaneous arising and interconnectedness of all things in which truth is self-evident.*” I interpret *Ereignis* for this study as the time the yoga practitioner feels one’s life is making sense, and one feels able to make peace with oneself and with the world through one’s experience of yoga practice.

### ***2.5.1.2 Merleau-Ponty’s phenomenology***

Merleau-Ponty is important for two reasons. Firstly, his main concept of *embodiment* plays a large role in Yoga practice. Secondly, his idea of ‘*learning arc*’ and its derivative of ‘*Skill Acquisition model*’ by Dreyfus are important for understanding the process of transformation yoga practitioners make. In contrast to Heidegger who rarely mentions the body (Inwood, 1997, p. 28), the concept of *the body* is the core theme for Merleau-Ponty’s philosophical thinking.

Merleau-Ponty (1962, p. xxi) says,

*“phenomenology’s task was to reveal the mystery of the world and of reason... by reason of the same kind of attentiveness and wonder, the same demand for awareness, the same will to seize the meaning of the world or of history as that meaning comes into being.”*

I read, in this paragraph, that both Heidegger and Merleau-Ponty share a distinctively similar tone of expression about ‘**wonderment**’ as our essence of existence. According to Takeda (1989, p. 172), Merleau-Ponty grew out of Husserlian phenomenology by placing the centrality of embodiment in his phenomenological thinking. Merleau-Ponty’s (1962) thinking is that our experience of life cannot be reduced to Husserlian ‘pure consciousness’, as our experience of the body is experiential, and this very embodiment makes our consciousness possible. Heidegger’s ontological central concept was Being-in-the-world, which Merleau-Ponty (1968) later replaced with his ‘**Flesh-in-the-world**’. For Merleau-Ponty, our being is presented to the world with the body. Matthews (2006) asserts that the basis of Heideggerian phenomenology is formed against the positivist theory that scientists must remain objective. This objective picture implies that the observer’s own body is just one object in the world to be observed, where Merleau-Ponty says that our being is both object and subject. To be human for Merleau-Ponty (1962, p. 87), one has two dimensions, the ‘physiological’ and the ‘psychic’. Our body can be an object of scientific observation, but it is also a subjective, experiencing human being (Matthews, 2006; Csordas, 1994b, 2002). Firstly, our body is in a sense a biological unit, and it is ‘the objective body’ which can be studied by the science of biology. Secondly, it is within the framework of Phenomenology, that our being-in-the-world is only possible with embodiment. Our body is always feeling, sensing, perceiving, trying to make sense of the world and find meaning. Merleau-Ponty offers the concept of ‘*pre-objective*’, this is the ‘*inner body*’ which is experiencing the world, and it has culturally and historically compounded relationships with the world.

Towards the end of his *Phenomenology of Perception* (1962), Merleau-Ponty discusses **freedom**. He writes, “*Man is but a network of relationships, and these alone matter to him.* (1962, p. 456)” Merleau-Ponty shares the theme here again with Heidegger that we are here, not merely existing but we are with other people together, intrinsically related and intertwined. It is the essence of our mode of being in this world. Merleau-Ponty

(1964a, p. 210) writes that our life is balanced between hazardous contradictions because we are **living beings**. When we accept the fact that life is what it is and decide to live it to the full, then we will find meaning in it “*since nothing has meaning if it is not his life*.” He says that it is our essential freedom to decide to take life into our own hands.

In this sense, both Heidegger and Merleau-Ponty regard wonderment of Living Being at the centre of their phenomenology. However, they differ because Heidegger considers that our life has value because of our inevitable death, whereas Merleau-Ponty places its importance with our bodily existence.

Next, I will consider Maslow’s ‘Hierarchy of Human Needs’ model, as it represents an important part of ‘The Human Potential Movement’ and the New Age Movement (Puttick, 2004).

## **2.6. The self and Maslow’s ‘Hierarchy of Human Needs’ model**

Abraham Maslow (1943; 1970) postulated the theory of human motivation as a ‘Hierarchy of Human Needs’. He distinguished five levels of progressing needs that individuals strive to satisfy in order to become a healthy, fully functioning human being. His theory has been highly regarded and adopted as a useful model in many areas of life. Maslow (1970) himself acknowledges that his findings conform more closely with Taoism and Zen, both concerned with the ‘serenity experience’ and ‘transcendence’.

I outline here his ‘**Hierarchy of Human Needs**’ model as the second of four self development models. According to Maslow (1943), human beings have ‘higher needs’ in addition to the ‘lower needs’ which we share with others. These lower needs - safety, belongingness, love and respect - can be satisfied only with other human beings. Free-choice situation of individuals must also include the gratification of ‘higher-needs’. Maslow (1968) called the ‘lower-needs’ as deficit-needs and the ‘higher needs’ as growth-needs; satisfying deficiencies avoids illness; growth satisfactions produce positive health. At the self-actualization level, Maslow (1970) postulates two states: *the*

*peak experience* and *the plateau-experience*. Maslow (1968, p. 90) explains “The peak-experience is felt as a self-validating, self-justifying moment which carries its own intrinsic value with it.” The latter, in contrast, is serene and calm. The high plateau experience always has a noetic and cognitive element. It becomes a witnessing, an appreciating, serene and cognitive blissfulness. One can experience this as very pleasant, continuing, and contemplative, rather than something akin to a climactic explosion which then ends (Maslow, 1970). Maslow (1970, p. 64) calls it ‘B-values’ and says, “Perhaps my most important finding was the discovery of what I am calling B-values or the intrinsic values of Being.” As Maslow recognized, the need for self-actualization does not necessarily develop when the others are fulfilled (1968, p. 163).

Although Maslow originally believed that the after effects of peak experiences lead individuals to be more altruistic, one does not need to be a self-actualizer to become loving and kind to others, but to be reflexive and aware of oneself and others’ needs.

Despite the fact that Maslow’s theory has been widely influential, he did not discuss how one can fulfill the various stages of needs, or the mechanisms of particular experiences. However, Maslow’s Model became a foundation of ‘Human Potential Movements’, and pushed The New Age Movement forwards in the USA and Europe. Thus, Modern Yoga spread on the back of these social and cultural movements.

In the next section, I will explore further the relationship between yoga, Buddhism and phenomenology, because they are important ideas for this study. I believe that they all share the key ideas of understanding of the lived experience of yoga practitioners.

## **2.6 The close link between Yoga, Buddhism and Phenomenology**

As I mentioned in chapter 1, I started practicing a form of yoga in Tokyo called Oki Yoga in Japan, or Buddhist Yoga in the west, and was strongly influenced by Buddhism and this view of yoga still imbues my yoga practice.

From my experience of talking to members of the BWY, I feel as if I am trying to understand and integrate two separate systems of yoga, namely, the western view and

the eastern view. The main reason for this complex understanding of yoga is that I have come to understand the closely intertwined connections between the historical development of yoga in India and in the rest of the world, and the historical diversification of Buddhism. I have also come to understand the similar philosophical standpoints of some of the Buddhist schools and phenomenological theory. I am not discussing a so-called universal, singular form of yoga but various systems of self development which use some elements of yogic methods. Similarly, neither Buddhism nor phenomenology has a unified representative school of thought. However, it is important to recognize the common elements which Buddhism and yoga share, which leads me to bring phenomenological methodology to this study.

Van Manen asserts that “Phenomenological human science is a western research method which should not be confused either with certain ‘mystical’ or eastern meditative techniques of achieving insights about the ‘meaning of life’ (1990, p. 23)”. However, what I am trying to explore in this section is not a methodological concern, but the underlying ontological concepts which inform my study by clarifying where I come from. Since hermeneutic phenomenology use my personal understanding of the world as the tool to extract the essences of lived experiences of the subject group. Heideggerian Swiss psychiatrist Medard Boss (1994, p. 296) comments on the closeness between the Eastern thought and phenomenology,

*“Whoever has the good fortune to be in close and extended association with the people of India, Japan, and China experiences how their being-in-the-world — without detriment to the vigour with which they appropriate and exploit Western science — is shaped always, continually, and decisively by a traditional relationship with the world that is astonishingly close to the vision of European phenomenology just now unfolding.”*

In the following section, I explore the connection between yoga and Buddhism, Buddhism and phenomenology, and yoga and phenomenology. Then, I describe and discuss self development models of Dreyfus’s ‘The Skill Acquisition’ and ‘The Ten Oxherding Pictures’ of Zen Buddhism.

### **2.6.1 Yoga and Buddhism**

Historically, Classical Yoga and the origin of Buddhism share the same philosophical background, i.e. Samkhya philosophy (Eliade, 1969; *et al.*). With the emergence of Hinduism, Classical Yoga went through a period of drastic change towards Tantric and Hatha Yoga. Werner (1987, p. 38) describes, “From about the 4<sup>th</sup> century, A.D., religious thought, feelings and practices in India became increasingly influenced by the philosophy of Saktism or the role of the ‘eternal feminine’ in the cosmic scheme.” Where Classical Yoga emphasizes meditative practice, Tantric and Hatha Yoga emphasize psychic energy for spiritual transformation.

200 years after the passing of Buddha, Buddhism began splitting into sections, mainly Hinayana, Mahayana, and Vajrayana, each with its own characteristics and spiritual ideals (Sangharakshita, 2004). However, Buddhism eventually disappeared from India during the Middle Ages when Islam invaded the subcontinent.

As for Mahayana Buddhism, it made in-roads to in China, and later formed Zen and the Pure Land sects. They use sitting meditation and chanting, respectively.

In Japan, the esoteric form of Buddhism, the Yogacara school, has been mainly active in Shingonshū which was founded by Kukai (Davis, 2006a). The sect developed Yuishiki, an intricate theory of the bodymind (Matsunaga, 1991). Yuishiki theory expounds the so-called deep psychology, the complexities of unconscious mind, the body and transcendence. It later influenced Jung (1995) and Wilber (1996; 2000; 2004), and instigated the development of transpersonal psychology (Okano, 1998). The Zen school has also had a huge influence on the Western philosophical/psychological movement with its meditative traditions. For instance, Hirai (1989) explored Zen meditation and psychotherapy, and Austin (1998) investigated the relationship between the brain, consciousness and Zen experience. The history of the movement of Buddhism to the West and its influence have been observed and recorded by Fields (1986) and Batchelor (1994).

Nakamura (1964) explains the reasons why Buddhism became divided into such diverse schools. He strongly argues that the differences amongst Oriental countries are extremely complex, and the dichotomy that divides the West and the East is too simplistic. He explains that because of the characteristics of the inhabitants in each country, Buddhism has been transformed to suit their particular populations. Nakamura claims that India preferred abstract, metaphysical ontological thinking, whereas the Chinese always founded their thinking on concrete, practical and individualistic ideas. Tibetans submit themselves to religiously charismatic individuals and the Lamaist social order to Shamanistic tendencies. The Japanese have the tendency to accept natural phenomena, to emphasize a limited social nexus, and intuitive, emotional thinking. There are schools of thought that believe that such differences are brought on by the countries' particular climates (Watsuji, 1979), and their linguistic characteristics (Mori, 1978).

I briefly outlined how traditions of yoga and Buddhism have been closely developed and are still influencing one another.

### ***2.6.2 Buddhism and phenomenology***

Zen Buddhism was associated with many western schools of thought. In particular, the influence of the Kyoto school on western thinkers is important to this study. The Kyoto school of philosophy (Davis, 2006b) was led by the philosopher and Zen practitioner Nishida Kitaro, a close friend of Daisetsu Suzuki, at Kyoto University. Parkes (1996) argues that although Heidegger was reluctant to admit an East Asian connection, his principle ideas concerning Being (*Sein*) and Nothing (*Nichts*) are too close to be coincidental. According to Parkes (1996), Heidegger's direct contact with four members of the Kyoto School went back to 1922, and over fifteen years he discussed with them East Asian thought and culture at a sophisticated level. He finally admitted their influence on him in 1954 during an interview with Tetsuka Tomio, 'An Hour with Heidegger' (May, 1996, pp. 59-64). Ueda (1992) recalls that Heidegger was so impressed with *The Ten Oxherding Pictures* of Zen, that he recommended it to be translated and published in German, which eventually materialized in 1958. The Ten Oxherding Pictures will be discussed later in this section.

In ‘*Zen Buddhism*’, Barret (1956) recalls a remark made by Heidegger to a friend upon reading one of Suzuki’s books, “*If I understand correctly, this is what I have been trying to say in all my writings.*” (quoted in von Eckartsberg and Valle, 1981, p. 296)

Watts (2001, pp. 75-78) explains his understanding that Heidegger’s description of ‘authenticity’, ‘care’, and in his later idea of ‘release’ (‘let things be’) are so close to Zen Buddhism, that “*The parallels between Heidegger and Asian thought are clear.*” There are other philosophers (Dallmayr, 1992; Steffney, 1977) who have examined how closely Heidegger’s ideas are influenced by the Kyoto school scholars and Zen.

However, I notice that the difference between Heidegger’s phenomenology and the Kyoto School is the Christian idea of ‘*Guilt*’, which Heidegger seems to take seriously (Watts, 2001). For Nishida, as a Buddhist, he regards individuals as having the inherent ‘Buddha nature’ of goodness (Parkes, 1987). I think that this different perception of the human nature plays an important role later on for the New Agers who want to believe in the ‘inner self’, and their acceptance of the Eastern ideas.

There is another difference between Heidegger and some Buddhist schools of thought, which is the doctrine of ‘*karma and reincarnation*’ (von Eckartsberg and Valle, 1981). This doctrine has no place in Heideggerian phenomenology.

Kazashi (1999, p. 107) explores ‘the striking convergence’ between the central ideas of the later Merleau-Ponty and Nishida (Maraldo, 2005). Although there is no direct influence of Nishida on Merleau-Ponty’s writing, Kazashi asserts that there are enough shared elements in their philosophical thinking. I believe this similarity may explain the perennial and strong interests in Merleau-Ponty in Japan.

### ***2.6.3 Yoga and phenomenology***

The key connection between yoga and phenomenology seems to involve the Husserlian phenomenological process of ‘*transcendental reduction*’. The phenomenological process of reduction was the focus of Husserl’s work to “ensure that his researches truly



attained the status of genuine science” (Russell, 2006, p. 57). Russell (2006, p. 58) explains that the transcendental reduction is to *bring into views* the fundamental subject matter of Husserlian phenomenology – i.e. pure intentional consciousness – and *isolate* it as a sphere of being for investigation.

However, the importance of the reductive process in yoga as well as phenomenology has been discussed by Sinari (1965), Morley (2001), Marion (1998), and Sarukkai (2002). Sinari (1965) compares yoga’s meditative process of samadhi to Husserlian reduction. He examines whether Husserl’s ‘unbracketability’ of reflective ego may impose fundamental limitations on its attempt to transcend reflection, and also whether the final stage of phenomenological suspension is similar to yogic samadhi. Sinari (1965) and Marion (1998, pp. 142-3) describe Husserl’s transcendental reduction as wanting.

The Husserlian phenomenological reduction process contains contradiction. As Marion (ibid.) suggests extracting ‘pure consciousness’ by the act of cognition is rather difficult, and the objectivity of the process is questionable as it requires intuition and imagination. Furthermore, Husserl’s determination to build phenomenology as a rigorous science (Smith, 2003, p. 18) and psychology of consciousness (Giorgi, 1985) is rather limiting for my study. The study of yoga not only investigates consciousness but also the mode of ‘the Being in the world’ (Heidegger, 1962) and ‘the being in the Flesh’ (Merleau-Ponty, 1962). For my research aim, ‘pure consciousness’ is only a part of ‘Embodied Being’ in the living world with others.

Sarukkai (2002) and Morley (2001) explore further the notion of the inner body from a phenomenological point of view. Using Merleau-Ponty’s terms, such as ‘dimensionality’, ‘thickness’, ‘corporeality’ and ‘depth’, they investigate the lived experience of yoga practice, and what the practice means for the practitioners. Sarukkai (2002, p. 471) explains, “Like the asanas, the practice of pranayama is also one that has an essential engagement with the inner body, both in a phenomenological aspect of this practice and in the beneficial effects on specific organs like the liver, spleen, pancreas, and the abdominal muscles.” Therefore Sarukkai suggests that Merleau-Ponty’s philosophy comes closest to understanding the phenomenological import of yogic

practices.” Then, Sarukkai (2002, p. 475) concludes that “The absence of the idea of inner body in his (Merleau-Ponty) philosophy compounds this confusion. Yoga is most definitely a philosophy and practice of the ‘inner’.” Sarukkai (ibid.) tries to show that the ‘inner’ phenomenology of yoga and Merleau-Ponty’s philosophy complemented each other.

In summary, Merleau-Ponty’s idea of inner and outer was conceived to be integrated and transcended paradigmatically. By uniting inner and outer with corporeality of the body, we can rise above the dichotomy of the body and the mind, the self and the other, the person and the world and so forth. In Merleau-Ponty’s phenomenology, ‘inside’ means the internal body as well as the internal mind, ‘outside’ means the outer body as well as the relatedness with outside people and the world.

## **2.7. Development of the self in Phenomenology and Asian Thought**

I now look at the theories and ideals of ‘The Skill Acquisition’ model and ‘The Ten Oxherding Pictures’ model. Both depict a process of transformative self-development.

### **2.7.1 Dreyfus’s Skill Acquisition model**

Dreyfus (1982) uses Merleau-Ponty’s theory of ‘*Learning arc: the way a skilled agent moves towards obtaining a maximum grip*’ to analyse the skill acquisition processes of computing. Dreyfus and Dreyfus (1986, p. 5) assert that their model of ‘**Five Stages of Skill Acquisition**’ is based on the writings of Merleau-Ponty and Heidegger.

Merleau-Ponty (1962, pp. 135-6) writes on the ‘**intentional arc**’,

*“Beneath intelligence as beneath perception, we discover more fundamental function, ‘a vector mobile in all directions like a searchlight’. One through which we can direct ourselves towards anything, in or outside ourselves, and display a form of behaviour in relation to that object...that the life of consciousness – cognitive life, the life of desire or perceptual life – is subtended by an ‘intentional arc’ which projects round about us our past, our future, our human setting, our physical, ideological and moral situation, or rather which results in our being situated in all these respects. It is this intentional arc which brings about the unity of the senses, of intelligence, of sensitivity and motility.”*

Merleau-Ponty regards the intentional arc to be the *driving force of our motivation* for learning. In his view, the intentional arc is also the uniting force of our functioning existence. Upon this idea, Dreyfus builds the theory of skill acquisition (Dreyfus, 1982; 1987). Through the processes of skill acquisition, the learner must acquire the skills to deal with the tools and situations, and transform his relationship with them. As the result the learner transforms his relationship with the world and his place in it.

Dreyfus and Dreyfus (1986, p. 5) refer Merleau-Ponty's claim that perception and understanding are based in our capacity for picking up not rules, but flexible styles of behaviour. Explaining Heidegger, they also say that we are able to understand what a chair or a hammer is only because it fits into a whole set of cultural practices in which we grow up and with which we gradually become familiar. It is the way we learn a skill, how to use tools and the body for certain purposes.

According to Dreyfus and Dreyfus (1986), Skill Acquisition consists of Five Stages:

Stage 1: Novice. This is the stage of the instruction process in which the instructor guides the novice in deconstructing the complex skills to an easy-to-understand form.

Stage 2: Advanced Beginner. As the practice progresses and the novice gains experience and confidence, he begins to build meaningful additional aspects of practice into the situation.

Stage 3: Competence. Gaining more experience and confidence, the learner recognizes and performs the work-at-hand with requisite skills without hesitation or failure. As he becomes more competent at this stage, he tends to become more emotionally involved in his tasks, and wants to advance his skill and knowledge.

Stage 4: Proficient. As the learner becomes more proficient in the skill, and is seen as such, he becomes more involved with the performance and emotionally attached. He tends to recognize a large number of relevant skills applicable to each different situation. He also tends to aim for higher goals, or to set more personally selected goals.

Stage 5: Expert. The proficient performer is immersed in the world of his chosen skilful activity, sees what the best way of handling the given situation is, and is able to carry it out. He is also able to guide others if necessary with his expertise. He may also be involved with creative activities using his skill.

In a clinical research, Benner (2001) successfully applied this model to investigate how nurses acquire clinical skills.

This skill acquisition process appears quite relevant for Yoga practitioners' progression up to certain stages. The problem for my study is that this model seemed insufficient as it stops at stage five, and I would need to refine the model and add further stages, i.e. the internalization of the skill practice, and the usage of the skill for aiding others.

### ***2.7.2 The Ten Oxherding Pictures of Zen model***

It was reported that Heidegger liked the Zen drawing of *The Ten Oxherding Pictures*, and he was said to be attracted to the 9<sup>th</sup> picture. This episode was recorded by one of the students at his research office at that time (Ueda & Yanagida, 1982, p. 19). The Ten Oxherding Pictures symbolically depict personal development in the Eastern cultures, and a number of academic papers in the East as well as the West mention them in connection with yoga (Watanuki, 2004), Buddhism (Suzuki, 1935; Akizuki, 1978), Phenomenology & Philosophy (Watts, 2001, p. 75; Fukuyama, 2005, pp. 303-14), and Psychology of personal growth (Yokoyama, 2008; von Eckartsberg and Valle, 1981).

The outline of the drawings was summarized mainly from Suzuki's (1935, pp. 89-98) account as his books on Buddhism were most well-known in the West, and I took some other accounts (Ueda and Yanagida, 1982; Yokoyama, 2008) into my own interpretation. The Ten Oxherding Pictures were authored by a famous Chinese Zen monk, Kaku-an Shi-en in the 12 century A.D. The pictures aim to depict a symbolic representation of personal growth/transformation through searching for 'the Self'. When one wants to search for his 'true self', it is usually the case that he is feeling insecure and having doubts about where he belongs, or if his life has meaning.

*The summary of the Pictures is below:*

No. 1 Searching for the Ox (the Self): The beast is lost, for the oxherd has himself been led out of the way through his confusion and misjudgement in life. His desire for gain and fear of loss is burning like fire inside him. Alone in the wilderness, the boy is

intently searching for the missing ox. In Heidegger's everyday fallenness, this is the state of mind that is not lost but hidden.

No. 2 Seeing the Traces: By learning about the nature of being and practicing meditation, the boy finds the Traces. He is still too confused to distinguish truth and falsehood. He is not ready to understand that the objective world is a reflection of the Self.

No. 3 Seeing the Ox: The boy finds the way to the ox by hearing the sound of the bell. He can see himself clearly in harmonious order.

No. 4 Catching the Ox: In the wilderness for a long time, he faces up to the ox, but it is hard to keep under control, and refuses to be broken. He sometimes is at peace and harmony with himself, at other times his will becomes overwhelming and ungovernable. So, he needs to hold a whip and tether to keep the ox tightly bound.

No. 5 Herding the Ox: He is trying to tame the wild ox. When a train of thought distracts the boy, the ox sees it and tries to escape. When he feels that he is awakened to his true nature, he loses his grip, and the ox runs away. When the ox is properly looked after, it will grow pure and docile, and will follow the boy without a chain.

No. 6 Coming Home on the Ox's back: The struggle is over, and the boy is not bothered by gain or loss but himself. Nothing can disturb his simple joy. He is coming home. The theme changes here from the ox, and 'the self', to 'home' where one belongs. The boy becomes a man.

No. 7 The Ox forgotten, Leaving the Man Alone: When the man arrives home, the ox is nowhere to be seen. He does not need to look for the ox, he and the ox are one, and he is just *be himself*.

No. 8 The Ox and the Man Both Gone Out of the Sight: The picture is just a white tableau showing nothing. All thoughts disappear, even the meaning of sacred is gone.

Everything becomes one, the man, the ox, the home and his thoughts. It is at the state where everything has gone back to serenity, ‘śūniyatā’, the original state of the world. Eliade (1969:215) calls it as ‘the truth of the universal void.’

No. 9 Returning to the Origin, Back to the Source: The picture depicts the simple unspoiled nature, while the man watches it with immobile serenity and equanimity. The waters are blue, the mountains are green, and he is sitting in a hut observing things undergoing changes. He accepts things as they are without emotional involvement. Heidegger was said to be fond of this picture (von Eckartsberg and Valle, 1981, p. 306). Suzuki (1965, p. 144) quotes William Blake’s poem (1977, p. 506) to represent the acceptance of the world as it is;

*To see a World in a Grain of Sand  
And a Heaven in a Wild Flower  
Hold Infinity in the palm of your hand  
And Eternity in an hour*

No. 10 Entering the City with Bliss-bestowing Hands: His cottage gate is closed, no sage knows him, his inner glow hidden away and he goes on his own way refusing to follow the steps of the ancient sages. Bare-chested and bare-footed, the man goes into the market. Covered by dust and mud, he smiles broadly. At this stage, the man goes back to the community of people again, joining in and helping them as one of them without conspicuous gestures.

The Ten Oxherding Pictures illustrate the developmental stages of Zen self-seekers. It starts with a person in a state of confused insecurity. He searches his inner self with the help of elders. He finds it (awakening), tames it (deepening insight), harnesses it, and comes home with it (subjective-self and objective-self becoming one). Then, he forgets about the ox / the self (non-requirement of the self-identity), and one (the self) becomes nature/the world itself. Finally he returns to the community to take part, and helps others (deciding to live among ordinary people). It is a circulatory or spiral movement. For Zen practitioners, the stages 8, 9 and 10 are significant as they illustrate the nature of their ideal goal and ‘no-self’.

It is also significant for my study that The Ten Oxherding stages share similarities with the developmental stages of *Patanjali's eight limbs in classical Yoga*.

However, they both remain nostalgic and out-of-time ideals for us who live in the highly technologized era where we can choose to take a path which can lead to our chosen personal growth.

In the next section, I investigate the historical background to the propagation of modern yoga, the New Age Movement.

## **2.8. The New Age Movement**

Modern Postural Yoga became popular on the back of the New Age Movement. I will consider new age spirituality, some characteristics of the movement and 'the self' project for New Agers, and its social implications.

### ***2.8.1 Spirituality***

In order to understand recent yoga popularity in the UK, we need to understand the background social movements after the Second World War. In particular, the New Religious Movement (NRM) and the New Age Movement (NAM) in the latter half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century in the West greatly influenced our views towards health and well-being. Both movements share many elements of a new spiritual search after the World wars and the cold wars (Bruce, 1995). The late 1960s and early 1970s saw a large number of new cults and sects entering the world. Some of them were from the eastern Hindu and Buddhism sects such as Rajneeshism, Transcendental Meditation (TM), and Krishna Consciousness (Campbell, 2007; Partridge, 2004; Ram-Prasad, 2005; Bruce, 1995).

Bruce (1995) divided the new religious movements into two camps, *the world-rejecting* and *world-affirming*, corresponding with Weber's (1991, original work published in 1948) *other-worldly* and *this-worldly* orientations. The World-Rejecting Movement does not value the human self much. As in traditional Christianity, a human person (self) is essentially sinful and is only redeemed by being subordinated to the hierarchical authority. World-affirming movements do not have most of the features associated with

‘religion’, i.e. they have no church, no collective ritual of worship, no fully developed theology (Bruce, 1995).

Both camps draw on some notion of a ‘cosmic consciousness’ to explain how the individual self may have powers and potentials beyond its ‘this-worldly’ constraints. Importantly, the self is the main focus of attention (Bruce, 1995; Heelas, 1996). Those movements which were least traditionally religious, mostly individualistic, and mostly directed to help consumers to either succeed in the material world, or to become reconciled to their present circumstances. They have proved the most popular and enduring (Bruce, 1995; Partridge, 2004).

### ***2.8.2 The New Age Movement***

Bruce (1995) and Campbell (2007) explain that the 1970s’ new religious movement occurred partly as the mainstream churches declined and the cultural authority of Christianity eroded, leaving a large hole in society. Their appeal can be understood as a response to the rationalisation and the intellectualisation of the modern world, which often leads ordinary individuals to feel alienated in what Weber (1991, p. 350) called “*the disenchantment of the world*”. With the loss of a sense of a God-given, meaningful and ethically orientated world, modern life is so fragmented that many people find it too difficult to identify with their public roles and find them satisfying and fulfilling.

The New Age Movement is regarded as a semi-overlap of the new religious movement. According to Heelas (1996), who has written extensively on the subject, the ‘New Age’ is the term used loosely to describe a very wide range of beliefs and practices which became popular in the 1970s, and one of the dominant characteristics of the New Age thought is its eclecticism. With eclecticism comes a diffuseness that means that there are few clear divisions and boundaries, but instead a milieu in which people acquire and absorb a variety of beliefs and practices that they combine into their own and attend to with differing degrees of seriousness. Bainbridge (1997) likened the New Age Movement to a cultural fog bank, almost completely lacking in large-scale formal organization giving the fringes of faith a mysterious appearance. Bloom (1991) summarized the themes of the New Age under the following four categories:



- 1) New Science: The interconnectedness of everything informs New Age attitudes to health and healing. In place of medical/scientific treatment of symptoms and organs, there is attention to the whole person.
- 2) New Ecology: The planet is seen as an organism and is connected with our responsibility to the earth.
- 3) New Psychology: it claims to be able to liberate our real and vast potential so that we become integrated, fulfilled and completely loving human beings.
- 4) New Spirituality: this is the dynamic underlying the above three themes.

Heelas (1996) finds that the New Age Movement is popular in the most affluent and cosmopolitan parts of the country, and spiritual growth appeals mainly to those whose more pressing material needs have been satisfied. He asserts that the spiritual dynamics of the New Age Movement most appeal to the university educated middle classes working in the expressive profession whose education and work cause to have an articulate interest in human potential (Heelas, 1996).

The traditional forms of Christianity possess a degree of cohesion through their shared histories, traditional liturgies, and common language, compared to the amorphous world of the New Age. The New Age god is 'within', or 'inside', and all of us have the potential to tune in to ourselves. According to Heelas (1996), trajectories within Christianity have increasingly developed towards that position epitomized by the New Age. More and more Christians have come to emphasize the immanence of God; increasing numbers have come to accord religion a therapeutic role, as much to do with self-actualization in the here-and-now as eternal salvation (Heelas, 1996). According to Heelas (ibid.), the central values and assumptions of modernity facilitated the self-sacralization of the New Age faith. But he predicts that with the rapid spread of computer usage and the development of its technology, our sensitivities and forms of life were leading to a genuinely postmodern condition (1996, p. 217). In the current climate of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, the New Age Movement is no longer a common currency to describe group activities. With the extremely globalized world, lifestyle activities - including yoga- are organized with world-wide networks and freely mobile participants who cross cultural, geographical and ethnic boundaries so lightly.

### **2.8.3 The self project**

Against the cultural back drop of the late 20<sup>th</sup> century, the new religious movements transformed major Christian ideologies from the supernatural being to the God ‘within’. As Heelas (1996) describes, beliefs which have served to differentiate between the saved and the damned, true and false religion, have increasingly been replaced by beliefs of a more perennialized New Age variety. As a result, the notion of well-being and healing takes the dimensions of body, mind, emotion and spirituality, utilising psychologized rhetorical language for transformative, imaginative self processes (Csordas, 1994; 2002).

Examples of Westerners’ experiences of these self processes in yoga are: Ram Das (alias: Richard Alpert), who wrote the book “*Be Here Now* (1971)”. He felt desperate and empty in his academic pursuit in psychology at Berkeley and Harvard, until he found his spiritual guru. Later he became a devoted yogi. He describes the moment he met his guru,

*“And at the same moment, I felt this extremely violent pain in my chest and a tremendous wrenching feeling. And I started to cry. And I cried and I cried. And I wasn’t happy and I wasn’t sad. It was not that sort of crying. The only thing I could say was that I felt like I was home. Like the journey was over. Like I had finished” (1971, journey).*

R.D. Laing (1930-1980) describes his experience of yoga in a typically psychoanalytical manner, as a rebirth (quoted in Cray, 1996).

*“First, it seems pretty hopeless and despairing – there is no future, no movement, you’re not getting anywhere. And then you start getting somewhere, but you don’t know where, don’t know whether it’s forward or backward. And, finally, a light begins to dawn at the end of the tunnel, the abscess or bubble bursts, and you are out of it.”*

Both authors describe their experience of yoga as a process of self re-discovery.

### **2.8.4 The social implications**

Stan Grof was the editor of the book “*Ancient Wisdom and Modern Science*” (1984), which has been widely read by transpersonal psychologists, personal-development

psychologists and the New Agers. It was “*a result of the culmination of movement to bring the Western and Eastern ideas together*”, and the attempt urged the international transpersonal movement into a wider circle (Grof, 1984). The key theme of the book was ‘spirituality’, and it included the major spiritual leaders including yogis and ‘spiritually’ oriented scientists of that time.

Charles Tart (Then, Professor of Psychology at the University of California) was the editor of the books “*Trans-personal Psychologies*” (1975) and “*Ancient Wisdom and Modern Science*” (1969). His attempts were to bring ‘spirituality’ into the area of academic discipline. In the process, he brought “*Ancient Wisdom and Modern Science*” to the public. There have been many other influential western educated scientists who have tried to combine the Eastern ideas of yoga, Zen, and meditation with their discipline. The typical examples are Capra (1984), Austin (1998), and Wilber (1996; 1998; 2000). However, Hanegraaff (1996, p. 517) views ‘New Age as secularized esotericism’.

Together, they all have played a part in the cultural change in the way we think about ‘spirituality’ now. At the grassroots level, yoga was also going through a renewal and rebirth. Heimbeck (1986, p. xiv) writes “In but a few brief decades and in what must go down as the swiftest transcontinental importation in the history of human spirituality, all of the above-mentioned yogic practices and beliefs are being purveyed on a mass scale across the land, embraced by enthusiastic multitudes, and rapidly assimilated into the ever-evolving American culture.” With the New Age transnational movements, yoga was transported globally, and ensconced rapidly where it was imported.

In the next section, I will summarise the British Wheel of Yoga’s course texts used for teacher training, and give a brief outline of the British Wheel of Yoga and of some related issues such as the characteristics of their practice, the organization and its members.

## **2.9. The British Wheel of Yoga**

The British Wheel of Yoga developed in the 1960s, and the organization has formed the characteristics of Modern Yoga in Britain.

### ***2.9.1 A very brief guide to yoga texts***

As yoga practice deepens, yoga practitioners start reading yoga texts, and learning yoga theories and philosophies to understand what yoga is. Particularly when they enter the courses that the BWY organizes for the students, there are sets of books they are recommended to study. I outline some of the major texts the diploma course students **must learn** in order to understand the basis of yoga tradition. The following four texts are stated in the BWY teacher's diploma syllabus 2003 (attached in appendices).

These four texts are:

- Bhagavad-Gita
- The main Upanishads
- The Yoga Sutra of Patanjali
- Hatha-Yoga-Pradipika

*Bhagavad-Gita* (Lord Krishna's song)

An episode from Mahabharata, it belongs to the literature of Hinduism tradition. It was composed approximately 3-4<sup>th</sup> century BC. It consists of 700 stanzas, expounds various Yogic paths.

*The main Upanishads*

A genre of Hindu literature, with over 200 extant works, they are regarded as a sacred revelation of the wisdom, as opposed to the Vedas. The main themes are:

1. The teaching that the transcendental core of one's being - the Self (*atman*) - is identical to the transcendental core of the universe (*brahman*).
2. The doctrine of embodiment and the death of human beings.
3. The doctrine of karma and retribution.
4. The notion that karma production and reincarnation can be prevented through spiritual practices of renunciation and meditation.

*The yoga Sutra of Patanjali* (Aphorism of Yoga by Patanjali)

The authoritative exposition of Classical Yoga, it was probably written by several different authors between the 2<sup>nd</sup> century BC and the 2<sup>nd</sup> century AD. It comprises 4 chapters with 195 aphorisms. The work explains the 8 'limbs' of yoga. In its terminology, this work is closer to Mahayana Buddhism than Hinduism. It is

regarded as '*the bible of yoga*' by modern yoga practitioners (Smith and Smith, 1986:6)

*Hatha-Yoga-Pradipika* (Light of the forceful Yoga)

The most widely used manual on Hatha Yoga, written by Svatmarama Yogin (mid-14<sup>th</sup> century). He tried to integrate the physical disciplines with higher spiritual goals and practices. The book comprises 4 chapters totalling 389 couplets.

(Information mainly drawn from Feuerstein, 1997)

There are other reference books the BWY recommends to use, specifically anatomy and physiology books. But titles and authors are not specified, and choice is left to the students and Diploma Course Tutors (DCT).

### **2.9.2 Modern Postural Yoga (MPY)**

I summarize here how yoga has become a current phenomenon in Britain.

It seems that yoga practitioners believe that yoga not only improves their health, strengthens them against difficulties in life, but also provides a continuing and strong sense of self. By tracing yoga development in the West during the 20<sup>th</sup> century and the social zeitgeist which made this development possible, personal narratives of individual yoga practitioners can be placed in the wider perspective of western yoga history.

Yoga was originally developed in ancient India, and the knowledge has been handed down by demonstration and word of mouth from teacher to pupil as tradition.

After the British Empire colonized Southern Asia, yoga practice became known to a few westerners who had an academic interest in Indian history and philosophy (Worthington, 1982). Worthington (1982) explains that public interest in yoga was revived by Ramakrishna (1836-1886) whose message then was of the essential oneness of all religious traditions. Many of the yoga movements today follow this integrative teaching. His most well-known disciple was Vivekananda (1863-1902), and many westerners followed him by mainly spreading Hatha Yoga to the West.

The Theosophical society was formed in 1875 in New York by Mme Helena Blavatsky (1831-1891) and Henry Olcott. The society had been a catalyst in assisting the spread of yogic and Indian philosophical knowledge in the West (Stuckrad, 2005; Heelas, 1996; Faivre, 2000). The society translated and published many yogic texts, and there were attempts to modernise yoga in India. Ramana Maharishi (1879-1950) passed on his knowledge of Jnana Yoga. Aurobindo Ghosh (1872-1950) advocated an Integral Yoga in which he tried to combine the fragmented methods of specialized yoga practices into a holistic lifestyle. Sivananda (1887-1963) spread the moderate Hatha Yoga practice worldwide, and taught in his ashram in Rishikesh many teachers who have proved successful and reliable guides (Strauss, 2005). In this moderate Hatha Yoga way, yoga has gained grass-roots popularity in the West and other Asian countries (De Michelis, 2004).

In those days, the people who wanted to study yoga met difficulties of finding a guru. They were prepared to learn the Indian and/or Tibetan language and Sanskrit to read the scriptures, and spend years practicing yoga in order to gain spiritual satisfaction. There were also a number of Indian gurus who travelled to the West to spread their teachings. One of the famous yogi was *Swami Vivekananda* who gave a talk on yoga at the Chicago World Religious Convention in 1893. He made such a huge impression on the audience that William James writes,

*“In India, training in mystical insight has been known from time immemorial under the name of Yoga. Yoga means experimental union of the individual with the divine. It is based on persevering exercise; and the diet, posture, breathing, intellectual concentration, and moral discipline vary slightly in the different systems which teach it. The Yogi, or disciple, who has by these means overcome the obscurations of his lower nature sufficiently, enters into the condition termed Samadhi, “and comes face to face with facts which no instinct or reason can ever know.” ... When a man comes out of Samadhi, they assure us that he remains “enlightened, a sage, a prophet, a saint, his whole character changed, his life changed, illuminated.” (James, 1902, p. 400)*

Vivekananda visited many towns in the USA and founded the Vedanta society. He visited Britain and gave many talks (De Michelis, 2004; Worthington, 1996). Around the turn of the century, some westerners were opening their eyes to yoga.

C. G. Jung was also fascinated by the East and its cultures. He travelled in India, and was influenced deeply; for instance, he drew Mandala (pictures of Buddha) in later years. However, Jung writes (1995, original work published in 1936) on yoga,

*“The spiritual development of the West has been along entirely different lines from that of the East and has therefore produced conditions which are the most unfavourable soil one can think of for the application of Yoga. Western civilization is scarcely a thousand years old and must first of all free itself from its barbarous one-sidedness. This means, above all, deeper insight into the nature of man. But no insight is gained by repressing and controlling the unconscious, and least of all by imitating methods which have grown up under totally different psychological conditions. In the course of centuries the West will produce its own Yoga, and it will be on the basis laid down by Christianity.” (Jung, 1995, p. 165)*

Jung’s well-known interest in yoga has been often quoted (Naitou, 1991), and commented on (Hanegraaff, 1996; Stuckrad, 2005). However, his opinion that yoga would have difficulties spreading in the West was quite premature. The forms of yoga currently practised in the West are not based on Christianity or Hinduism, but health orientation and popular spirituality (Campbell, 2007). I will discuss further the reasons why yoga has become so popular later in chapter six.

### **2.9.3 A history of the British Yoga**

In the West during the 1930s and 40s, there was a growing interest in India and yoga, that saw a torrent of books published, for example Alexandra David-Neel on Tibet and Theos Bernard on Hatha Yoga. Among them, Paul Brunton was very popular, and his book *“A Search in Secret India”* (1947) sold well. In particular, and importantly for my study, M. Eliade published his scholarly and influential book *“Yoga: Immortality and Freedom”* in 1954. It was translated into English later (1969). He studied Sanskrit in Calcutta for three years and yoga in an ashram for six months (1928-31), then completed a doctoral thesis, which was published later and formed the basis for the above book. His books are still well-quoted in any serious studies on the subject of yoga (Feuerstein, 1989; Wicher, 1998; Burley, 2007; Stuckrad, 2005; De Michelis, 2004). According to Worthington (1982), the first yoga school was set up in Britain (in Epping) in 1949 by Sir Paul Dukes, an eminent ex-India civil servant. He also wrote a popular yoga book (1960). Yoga then had ‘cult’ status for the people who sought it out,

who had been a member of the elite class in Western society but who were disillusioned and wanted to find 'an alternative style of life' or 'deeper meaning in life'. Newcombe (2008) traces the way the British Wheel of Yoga was established in 1965. In the 1970s, hundreds of yoga classes started throughout Britain on the back of Local Adult Education classes (Newcombe, 2008), but there were many private classes too. Richard Hittleman ran a popular colour TV series in 1973, which was watched by millions of people. Hittleman also wrote popular yoga books (1969; 1966) which helped to spread yoga further. With many yoga gurus establishing branches in the major Western cities, yoga became accessible to most ordinary people. During the summer months, Indian gurus regularly visit North America, Britain, Europe and Australia, and Western students in return often visit their guru's ashrams in winter. Those well-known gurus often have world-wide networks of teaching centres, teachers and followers in addition to well-devised teacher training and teaching programs (Strauss, 2004). As more western teachers qualified to teach, an increasing number of venues ran yoga classes. Yoga continued to spread, mainly among the middle classes (De Michelis, 2004; Newcombe, 2007)).

In 1972, the European Union of National Federations of Yoga was established in Switzerland (Worthington, 1982). Seminars and retreats started being organized more widely. Since then, national bodies have been affiliated from all countries in Western Europe, and some from the eastern bloc. A 'Minimum Programme' was drawn up to provide a minimum statement of principles, so that all member countries could build their teacher training programmes on a similar standard, which is based on Patanjali's Eight Limbs of Yoga (Worthington, 1982). In this way, Western yoga has been standardized and quality-controlled within the western cultural milieu.

I will briefly sketch some of those gurus well-known in the West here, since these gurus and their disciples have had a profound influence on western yoga practitioners.

Swami Sivananda (1887-1963) of Rishikesh (in the Himalayas) trained many outstanding yogis, and sent them outside India to spread yoga. He was a physician but renounced the world, and set up the Divine Life Society, which later won an international reputation (Strauss, 2005; McKean, 1996). His best-known disciples are Swami Cidananda, the head of the Divine Life Society, Swami Satyananda of the Bihar School of Yoga. The Mahareshi Mahesh Yogi became famous for his system of mantra



yoga named Transcendental Meditation (TM), when the practice was associated with The Beatles in 1967 and hit the world's news headlines. It has been very successful in helping many people to reduce stress and bring them a peaceful mind (Worthington, 1982). There have been organizations (e.g. the NHS), which officially sanction its use as a medical treatment. The technique is very simple and uses repeated intensive mantra (Hewitt, 1991).

The big three schools of yoga in the UK trace their lineage to one Indian guru Sri T. Krishnamacharya (1888-1989). He taught B.K.S. Iyengar, K. Pattabhi Jois and T.K.V. Desikachar (Grzybowski, 1997). Krishnamacharya and these three teachers he trained are hugely responsible for yoga's rapid spread in the West. Between them they created the current popular schools of yoga: Iyengar Yoga, Ashtanga Yoga and Desikachar Yoga (later remaned Vini Yoga, and The Association of Yoga Studies, now Centre for Yoga Studies). All have a strong emphasis on Hatha Yoga, the practice of postures and breathing. Gryzybowski (1997) explains about these three schools: The Yoga developed by B.K.S. Iyengar demands attention to detail, symmetry and precision of alignment in the postures. His school uses specialized props extensively in this practice. K. Pattabhi Jois teaches a strong method called Ashtanga/Power Yoga. It is distinguished by using Bandha (body lock) and Ujjayi (strong breathing), accentuating a flow of postures. One aim of this style is to generate enough heat to cleanse the body of impurities; another is to break down any rigidity in the body and to build strength and stamina (Smith, 2008). T.K.V. Desikachar, Krishnamacharya's son, prefers to teach students individually, with just four or five gentle postures at a time. The student is given a prescribed sequence to practice to progress step by step. Pranayama and chanting are an important part of the sequence. This form of modern yoga practice emphasizes postures and breathing which characterize modern yoga practice in the West (De Michelis, 2004).

I traced here how yoga has evolved to gain popularity in the West, and who the main movers were in nutshell, I will turn to the history of the BWY next.

#### ***2.9.4 A short history of the BWY***

According to the official website of the British Wheel of Yoga, the organization was founded by Wilfred Clark 40 years ago in Birmingham. The main dates are:

- 1965 - *The Wheel of British Yoga* (WBV) was set up, and was run by volunteers.
- 1970 - The quarterly magazine was launched. It was later named Spectrum.
- 1972 - The European Union of National Federations of Yoga was established.
- 1973 - The Wheel ratified its first constitution and began to hold elections for official posts.
- 1975 - A teacher training program was drawn up to state the minimum principles.
- 1976 - *The British Wheel of Yoga* (BWV) was adopted as the formal name for the organization.
- 1987 - The central office was established at Sleaford in Lincolnshire.
- 1995 - The Sports Council awarded the BWV Governing Body status for yoga in Great Britain.
- 1999 - A full time office manager was employed at Central Office.
- 2005 – A full-time CEO was appointed to run the organization as a business enterprise.

The British Wheel of Yoga (BWV) has represented the yoga population in the UK as an umbrella organization for the European Union since 1995. In turn, the BWV came under the control of the European Sports Council and now under Sport England. The standard of adult education and safety regulation monitoring have become stricter, and these organizations make sure that the standard of qualification, insurance schemes, and in-service training are updated. This politically organized, regulated and structured secular yoga organization is a far cry from yoga gurus who originally spread the sacred teachings in ancient India. De Michelis (2004) describes this change as a shift from matha (monastery) to the fee-paying classroom. Currently the BWV is affiliated with other yoga organizations such as Mandala Yoga Ashram, The Life Centre and Triyoga (information drawn from their official site, <http://www.bwy.org.uk>, 2008). There are, however, yoga practitioners who are not registered with the BWV. They may belong to other unaffiliated guru schools, or they may not be keen enough to belong to any particular organization.

### ***2.9.5 The characteristics of the organization***

Yoga has become popular among the general population, and consequently an increasing number of public premises run yoga classes. Most of their learners want to gain improved health and well-being rather than spirituality (Newcombe, 2007). There has been a proliferation of 'Yoga schools with a difference', such as Power Yoga (for men), Tantric Yoga (for better sex), and Kripalu Yoga (for dancers and gymnasts), Yoga and Tai-chi and so forth. Some regard yoga as a leisure activity, and run courses such as Disco-Yoga, 'Yoga and Champagne' health farm weekends and Yoga holidays (FT, 13th November 2004).

With the help of mass media and the Internet, yoga has become marketable, yoga practice has been targeted as a field of commerce, and yoga tools and clothing are treated as desirable merchandise (Singleton and Byrne, 2008). The features and practices of yoga in these aspects can only be understood within a contemporary consumer culture and late-modernity as Giddens (1991) asserted.

I now consider some of the conspicuous features of the BWY.

At the start of year 2008, the membership of the BWY was approximately 8,500, half of whom are registered as teaching members (Spectrum, spring, 2008). The BWY is an eclectic, secular, educational and sport organization with an elected chairperson and various committees. According to their official web site, there is also a paid manager for running the organization in an effective businesslike way. It comes under the European Sports Council and receives support from them. It also organizes insurance policies for its teaching members and an in-service-training scheme, as well as organizing teacher training courses. It is affiliated with other European Yoga organizations to standardize the teaching program. It also organizes several annual events, such as the National Congress, the National Training Week, Regional Yoga Days, and Yoga Festivals. All of these are advertised in the quarterly magazine 'Spectrum', venues are hired, and some teachers are invited from various schools. They have an administrative office, but no other fixed building for their own. The committee members and the organizers are

elected and ratified, and there are no spiritual leaders in the organization. It illustrates a quintessential aspect of democratic, not charismatic, non-denominational modern yoga practice in the UK at the grassroots.

#### ***2.9.6 Its yoga practice and the members***

In this section, I will clarify who the BWY practitioners are, and what constitutes a yoga community, drawing information mainly from my 20 years of experience as a member.

Most yoga communities are basically organized internationally. If it is a guru oriented community, the headquarters or the main ashram is normally in India or in the United States. In the case of the British Wheel of Yoga, the central administrative office is in Lincolnshire. True to this organizational fact, many practitioners I have met on various occasions say that they started yoga as part of their sport/relaxation/fitness activities. Most yoga practitioners come to join publicly organized yoga classes such as adult education classes, and follow instruction from a teacher. Of those beginners' classes, yoga is limited mostly to bodily exercises and relaxation. In general, yoga practitioners' understanding of yoga, the contents of practice, theoretical and spiritual affinities differ considerably, and mostly their personal allegiance to yoga schools, gurus, organizations, teachers divide them. During the last 50 years in the West, yoga has become very popular through intense diversification. They all claim to have grounding in particular yoga schools, theories, particular gurus, or particular ways of applying yoga practice (Alter, 2004). Most of the BWY practitioners are slotting their practice into a busy daily life. Heelas (1996) describes it as fitting 'spirituality' into their way of life.

Since 1954, while many Christians objected to yoga in general, Krishnamacharya's disciple Iyengar and others introduced a very physiologically oriented yoga which spread and reduced resistance significantly (De Michelis, 2004; Hewitt, 1991).

To take an example, one of Iyengar's Italian disciples Vanda Scaravelli imbued her practice with Krishnamurti's teachings. In turn, she taught John Stirk, Peter Blackaby and John Carter, three currently popular British teachers with the BWY members. They are influenced by their profession, osteopathy, and they practise '*spine centred, gravity*

awareness' yoga. Their main reference book is '*Emotional Anatomy*' written by Stanley Keleman (1985).

This particular example includes four generations of a teaching lineage and students, illustrating how modern yoga transforms the meaning of practice in the process to suit the practitioners, i.e. the BWY members. Strauss (2004) described that yoga communities are very much like Tönnies' (2001, original work published in 1887) *Gemeinschaft*, united by intention rather than by blood or place.

### **2.9.7 Yoga therapy**

There are many new yoga students who are coming into classes, including the elderly, chronically ill, terminally ill, pregnant, and people with many other medical conditions. For those who practice therapeutic yoga, there have been a number of publications by medically trained yoga teachers (McCall, 2007; Ornish, 1990; Garde, 1975; Nagarathna *et al.*, 1990). In order to teach yoga to those students, yoga teachers need to be taught and trained in therapeutic aspects of yoga. There has been a movement in yoga schools to establish medicalization of yoga as a form of complementary medicine (De Michelis, 2008). The standardization, professionalization and regulation of yoga therapy to a certain extent seem inevitable if yoga therapy attempts to establish credibility and legitimacy (Cant and Sharma, 1996; 1999). Unfortunately, yoga therapists' qualifications are complicated to organize or standardize since there are a number of different schools of yoga in Britain, and many of them are branches of international yoga organizations, each with their own gurus abroad. They also place emphasis on different aspects of yoga theory or practice. There may lie huge problems needing solutions, for example, how to synthesize the ideologies of complementary therapy and yoga therapy, how to maintain spirituality in the commercial environment, the relationship between wholeness and consumerism (Saks, 1992; Saks, 1995; Fisher and Ward, 1994; Mitchell and Cormack, 1998; Furnham, 2000; Bivins, 2007).

## **2.10. Summary**

In order to place my study in the vast amount of yoga literature, I have classified them into very broad categories, from scientific quantitative research to modern social scientific research, and justified the contributory value of my study.

In order to understand how a modern yoga practitioner studies yoga, I summarized their main yoga text, Patanjali's Yoga Sutra as a self-developmental model.

I have looked at 'the self' from various points of view. I presented Maslow's 'Hierarchy of Human Needs' theory, and I also touched on the key ideas of phenomenology. I discussed the close link between yoga, Buddhism and phenomenology, and presented further two models: Skill Acquisition model by Dreyfus and The Ten Oxherding Pictures of Zen model.

I explored why and how people who live in a modern society, search for a sense of 'the self' on the back of The New Age Movement. I sketched the outlines of The New Age Movement, and their influence on us and the consequent social implications. Lastly, I traced the history of modern yoga in Britain, and The British Wheel of Yoga's progress over time, and where it is now. I noted its characteristic organizational features, secular aspects of managing the quality of yoga for members, as well as some problematic aspects of yoga therapy.

In the next Chapter, I will discuss how I decided to choose hermeneutic phenomenology as my research methodology, and justify the reasons for my choice.

### **3. Choosing Methodology**

#### **3.1 Introduction**

Through the process of yoga practice, the practitioner interprets what he/she does, and creates a unique individual meaning of ‘the self’ that fits into a modern individual lifestyle. This process of meaning construction will be examined through the lived-life narratives of yoga practitioners, and the theoretical foundation for analysis and interpretation will be based on hermeneutic phenomenology.

In order to answer the research question, “What is the nature of ‘the self’ yoga practitioners cultivate?” I have investigated various approaches, and concluded that my study required a qualitative research methodology since what I was trying to find out was the subjective experience of yoga practitioners. The following section explains how I reached the conclusion that the right methodology for my research was hermeneutic phenomenology.

This chapter ‘Choosing a Methodology, and the next chapter ‘Hermeneutic Phenomenological Methods in context’ are closely linked.

#### **3.2 Choosing a Methodology**

Firstly, I summarize qualitative research methodology, then I will provide an overview of ethnographic methodology and the reasons I could not use it. Thirdly, I will summarize the BNIM, and the reasons why I thought it was not for this study. Fourthly, I will summarize hermeneutic phenomenology for this study, and the reasons for choosing ideas of Heidegger (1962) and Merleau-Ponty (1962; 1964b). Finally, I will discuss the similarities and differences between descriptive phenomenology and hermeneutic phenomenology, and the reasons for my choice of the latter.

##### ***3.2.1 Qualitative research methodology***

This research intends to investigate the nature of ‘the self’ that arises out of individual life experiences of yoga practitioners.

Denzin and Lincoln (2003) explain that qualitative research is a field of inquiry which crosscuts disciplines, fields, and subject matters. It is surrounded by a family of complex, interconnected terms, concepts and assumptions. Denzin and Lincoln (2003, p. 3) divide qualitative research in North America into seven moments; (1) the traditional (1900 – 1950); (2) the modernist (1950 – 1970); (3) the blurred genres (1970 - 1986); (4) the crisis of representation (1986 – 1990); (5) A Triple Crisis: the post modern, a period of experimentation and new ethnographies (1990 – 1995); (6) postexperimental (1995 - 2000) and (7) the future (2000 - ).

During the blurred genres, the period of transition from positivism to post positivism, many qualitative methodologies were conceived and taken up. Denzin and Lincoln (2003, pp. 4-5) offer a generic definition of qualitative research as:

*“Qualitative research is a situated activity that locates the observer in the world. It consists of a set of interpretive, material practices that make the world visible. These practices transform the world. They turn the world into a series of representations, including field notes, interviews, conversations, photographs, recordings, and memos to the self. At this level, qualitative research involves an interpretative, naturalistic approach to the world. This means that qualitative researchers study things in their natural settings, attempting to make sense of, or to interpret, phenomena in terms of the meanings people bring to them.”*

The blurred genres era was a turning point for narrative and story telling (Denzin and Lincoln, 2003). As Bruner (1990, p. 115) recalls *“By the late 1970s and early 1980s, the notion of the Self as a story teller came on the scene – the Self telling stories that included a delineation of Self as part of the story.”* Bruner (ibid.) believes that narrative and story telling are the process of constructing meaning.

Narrative research has grown rapidly during the last two decades (Lieblich *et al.*, 1998). According to Polkinghorne (1988, p. 3-4), one of the projects of the mental realm is knowledge of the whole self. Against the tide of the cognitive revolution since the 1970s, narrative inquiry has grown, because *“narrative is one of the operations of the realm of meaning”*. Thus, Polkinghorne (1988, p. 6) summarises that we study narrative meaning *“to make explicit the operations that produce its particular kind of meaning, and to draw out the implications this meaning has for understanding human existence.”*

However, there are a variety of approaches to textual analysis in the social sciences, and the study of narrative is interdisciplinary. Geertz (1973) called it *‘interpretive turn’*.



Critics who are sceptical about treating language as a transparent medium treat story-telling as “*constructed, creatively authored, rhetorical, replete with assumptions, and interpretive.*” (Riesman, 1993, p. 5)

From the above point of view, the approach to narrative analysis is distinguished by an interpretive thrust (Riesman, 1993), and has to do with how the researcher interprets things (Bruner, 1990). Since then, there have been a number of qualitative research theories relating to the different ways narrative data are treated (Flick *et al.*, 2004).

### ***3.2.2 Comparing three qualitative methodologies***

For this research, I have tried and tested ethnography and the Biographical Narrative Interpretive Methods (BNIM) before deciding to use hermeneutic phenomenology.

#### ***3.2.2.1 Ethnography***

Prior to this doctoral research, I studied for an MSc in medical anthropology, and wrote my dissertation on “*Yoga therapy as a complementary medicine for low-back-pain sufferers*”. For this study, I carried out a 3-month ethnographic field work project at a yoga therapy organization learning about how to use the methodology. I found it was a fascinating experience.

According to Flick (2002, p. 147, sourced from Atkinson and Hammersley, 1998), there are 4 features of ethnographic research:

1. A strong emphasis on exploring the nature of a particular social phenomenon.
2. A tendency to work primarily with ‘unstructured’ data, that is, data that have not been coded at the point of data collection.
3. Investigation of a small number of cases in detail.
4. Analysis of data that involve explicit interpretation of the meanings and functions of human actions, the product of which mainly takes the form of verbal descriptions and explanations, with qualification and statistical analysis playing a subordinate role at most.

While I did the field work, I found that yoga therapy was founded and practiced on ideologies different from orthodox medicine. I used medical anthropological concepts of healing models which were based on cultural understanding of suffering. There were two reasons why I could not continue in this vein for further research despite my original intention. They were:

Firstly, I could not find a suitable research field.

The yoga therapy centre where I was going to do the fieldwork had to relocate. The director of the centre told me that they could not accommodate me until they had found a new suitable site, had settled down, and had started treating clients. Consequently, I turned to other areas of yoga therapy, as I knew from contemporary articles in yoga journals such as '*Spectrum*' and '*Yoga and Health*', that there were many clinics and mental hospitals which used yoga for treating illnesses. Unfortunately, although I wrote letters asking for permission for fieldwork at various sites, I could not obtain any permission from them. Hammersley & Atkinson (1995) explain that gaining permission to do an ethnographic field study in a formal organization is difficult. In particular, if the organization is an authoritative and bureaucratic one such as a hospital, the police, a prison, or the government, gaining entry becomes a hurdle unless one is already a member.

I then turned my research focus on the BWY practitioners' community using ethnographic methodology of participant observation. However, yoga communities in the UK are usually not concrete, but nebular and transient by nature, and I did not manage to find a suitable community in which to immerse myself for a period of time. As far as The British Wheel of Yoga is concerned, the yoga community is where yoga practitioners gather for the purpose of doing yoga, i.e. talking, teaching, learning, and practising. The nature of modern yoga community is voluntary, mobile, secular and temporal.

Strauss (2000, p. 183) describes,

*"The bodily practices of yoga likewise generate many different types of communities; the ones I am concerned... (with which) are transnational, but intersect with many other more localized circles. Approaching community in this light does, however, force us to re-evaluate our criteria for valid ethnographic research, established as they were during the period when geographically isolated communities provided the basis for anthropological study."*

Strauss calls this community ‘*an imagined community*’ (2008, p. 68).

However, the second reason ethnography was not suitable for my study was that I was already a member of the BWY practitioner community.

An ethnographer is traditionally an outsider to the community under study since the anthropological stance is to take a stranger’s viewpoint for social and cultural phenomena (Denscombe, 2003, p. 84), and, according to van Maanen (1996, p. 263), “*ethnography typically refers to fieldwork conducted by a single investigator who ‘lives with and lives like’ those who are studied, usually a year or more.*” Rapport (2002) explains that ethnography is suited to the study of exotic small life worlds because of its openness and flexibility. An anthropological ethnographer is, by tradition, required to take an objective view about the culture of a subjective group, i.e. ‘other cultures’, he/she is usually a stranger to the community.

From this point of view, I agreed that my inside knowledge of the BWY community might prevent me from having an objective understanding of phenomena related to the BWY. Consequently, I found that anthropological ethnographic research methods were not suitable to study BWY practitioners’ experiences, because I was no longer an outsider to the subject group.

However, I still consider that the ethnographic method in general is a very useful tool to obtain information about a group of people at the grassroots level. As Flick (2002, p. 147) says, “*Ethnography has been the most powerful influence on the transformation of qualitative research into some kind of postmodern research attitude as opposed to the more or less codified application of specific methods.*”

When I decided that the ethnographic research method was not suitable, I turned to another methodology which would facilitate my research.

### **3.2.2.2 Biographical Narrative Interpretive Methods**

I was then introduced to the Biographical Narrative Interpretive Methods (BNIM) by my supervisor. I went to a 4-day methodology training course which was run by the two academics who had been using it to study refugees and homeless people in Europe (Wengraf, 2001; Chamberlayne, *et al.*, 2000; Chamberlayne, *et al.*, 2002).

As I learned the theory, I felt that the analysis of narratives was interesting. Having done two pilot interviews and a group analysis, I felt that the method was lacking some important element to study yoga practitioners' life stories. I concluded that the social constructionist view of BNIM was not suitable to analyse yoga practitioners' narratives of 'lived-experience'. As I found that the narrative of yoga's lived experience is about bodily practice and embodied experience, which are subjective and private feelings, and difficult to understand through language deconstruction.

I outline what BNIM is, and the reasons why I decided not to use it.

On the back of the so-called 'interpretive turn' (Geertz, 1973), biographical research methodology was re-discovered and re-invented by Gabriele Rosenthal in Germany in 1980 (Rosenthal, 1998) after examining the first wave of Chicago biographic studies in the 1920s. Biographical research is now re-established and being used in sociology, oral history, and educational sciences (Wengraf, 2001). In the 1970s, Rosenthal was introduced to the narrative interview methods of Fritz Schutze (1983) which were provoking a great deal of discussion in the field of qualitative research (Rosenthal, 1998; Rosenthal, 2004).

Since the nature of BNIM requires an extensive and time consuming process, its sample size is relatively small, approximately 7 – 10 (Wengraf, 2001). I outline Wengraf's interview procedure method for BNIM (*ibid.*). Its data collecting method is mainly in-depth interviews, and the interview session is divided into three parts.

The first stage is to invite the informant's life story. The second stage is to ask the informant some further details on his/her life story, based on the researcher's notes taken during the first stage. Jones (2001; 2004) recommends the *Single Question* which is designed to instigate the life story of the informant. Wengraf (2001) explains that analyzing and interpreting *Single Question* aim at *Inducing Narratives* (SQUIN). The

informant may then be asked to fill in a questionnaire to give factual lived life details, e.g. the date of birth, family members, educational and occupational backgrounds.

Wengraf says that (ibid.), once the interview material has been worked over to produce answers to two theory questions – “what is the pattern of the lived life?”, and “what is the pattern of the told story and the self-presentation?” He uses Breckner’s (1998) 5 stages of ‘Principles and Procedures of the Biographic-Interpretive Methods’ to identify the case structure (ibid.). The deconstruction of narratives through spoken language aims at illuminating the difference between the life viewed from outside and self expression about their life. In order to do so, BNIM uses a group of outsiders to discuss the life trajectory of the narrator.

After I had obtained research permission from the university’s ethical committee, I interviewed two volunteers from the BWY members as pilot cases. I applied the in-depth interview procedures of BNIM, transcribed interview tapes, and carried out a group discussion. As a result, I decided that BNIM was not for my study.

After these two case studies, I felt that, firstly, doing 2 sub-sessions of interviews and performing SQUIN - BNIM procedure did not unravel the deeper level of bodily feelings. Particularly, the significance of yoga’s embodied practice that plays a symbolic significance in their sense of ‘the self’ was not captured.

Similar to my view, an anthropologist Csordas (2002) argues that textual narrative analysis is not adequate to capture the richness of the being-in-the-world experience, and interpretation of narrative needs the idea of the ‘Dasein’ (Being-in-the-world) (Heidegger, 1962) from phenomenological philosophy to fill the gap.

Secondly, I felt that the ‘minimalist passive interviewing technique’ (Jones, 2004) for interviewing the participants was difficult as what they narrated was not a chronological life story, but a reflexive inner-life story of transformation, and they needed prompts and gentle encouragement with empathy and understanding. I realized that it was a slow process for the participants to become aware of inner-feelings, and become reflexive in their mode of thinking before they actually talked about the subtle bodily feelings. A single question interview technique was not helpful in this respect. Consequently, I decided that I needed to look for another methodology.

However, I still regard BNIM's analytical approach as valid for other areas of research and for other research questions.

### **3.2.3 Phenomenology as methodology**

After taking an MA course in Applied Health Qualitative Research Methodology with De Montfort University, I decided that phenomenology was the best methodology for my research purposes. I then discovered that there were two different approaches within phenomenological methodology: descriptive and hermeneutic. Having read some of the related theoretical and research publications, I chose hermeneutic phenomenology as the most suitable methodology.

The reasons for choosing this approach were: firstly, from my past experiences in qualitative research, I realized the importance of in-depth interviews about their inner-selves. I also realized that, in order to do so, an empathetic approach played an important role (Smith, 1998). Secondly, phenomenology provides a tool to understand embodiment (Csordas, 1994a; 1994b; 1997; 2002). Thirdly, it enables us to understand the transformative processes of the experiences through narratives (Csordas, 1994a; 1994b).

In the following section, I outline what phenomenological methodology is, and probe into the entailing issues. I then briefly compare and contrast hermeneutic phenomenology and descriptive phenomenology, and explain the reasons why I chose hermeneutic phenomenology for my study.

As Merleau-Ponty (1962, p. vii) describes, phenomenology is the search for “*a philosophy which shall be a ‘rigorous science’, but it also offers an account of space, time and the world as we ‘live’ in them. It tries to give a direct description of our experience as ‘it is’*”. Thus, phenomenology tries to understand the essences of human experiences from inside without an objective view of causality. Van Manen (2002b) explains that phenomenology may be considered a human science method as a profoundly reflective inquiry into human meaning. Van Manen (1990, p. 184) writes, “*Phenomenology differs from the various human science approaches such as*

*ethnography, symbolic interactionism, and ethnomethodology in that phenomenology makes a distinction between appearance and essence.”*

In these descriptions, I felt that phenomenological analysis was suitable to answer the research question relating to ‘the nature of the self’ of yoga practitioners.

According to van Manen (2002b), there are two approaches to phenomenological inquiry, the philosophical one and the practical one. From a philosophical point of view, there are various phenomenological orientations. For social science researchers, phenomenology is useful in applying its method to their professional practice or to the areas of their lifeworld. Those applied areas of study are mainly in the human sciences department, e.g. education, clinical psychology, nursing, medicine. Van Manen (2002b) and Benner (1994) suggest that practitioners in the health sciences may study areas such as the nurse/doctor-patient relationship, how young children experience pain, or how the body experiences illness.

Adopting van Manen’s phenomenological methods, this study uses phenomenological views as part of a philosophical paradigm, and a practical methodology as an analytical procedure to extract essences.

### ***3.2.4 Descriptive phenomenology and Hermeneutic phenomenology***

The major research methodologies in phenomenological research are descriptive methodology and hermeneutic methodology (Maggs-Rapport, 2001), and they are considered here for their relevance to my study. Firstly, I will consider phenomenological reduction; then, I will explain my reasons for rejecting descriptive phenomenology, and finally, my reasons for choosing hermeneutic phenomenology.

#### ***3.2.4.1 Phenomenological reduction***

Research on the subject of yoga practice and phenomenology cannot avoid the issue of reduction, i.e. the process of abstracting the essence out of phenomena. Merleau-Ponty (1962, p. xiv) stresses the impossibility of a complete reduction. Van Manen (1990, p. 185) uses the word ‘reduction’ as a necessary analytical process, but in a different way

to Husserl (1970) and Giorg (1985). He writes that we should not see the reduction as an end in itself. Rather the reduction is a means to an end.

Denscombe (2003, p. 102) explains:

*“Researchers who use a phenomenological approach need to be explicit about their own ways of making sense of the world and, in order to get a clear view of how others see the world, they need to suspend (or bracket off) their own beliefs temporarily for the purposes of research.”*

A phenomenological approach requires a detailed description of lived experiences, but the researcher also needs to suspend their own beliefs, expectations and predispositions as much as possible about the phenomenon under investigation. As Denscombe (ibid.) says *“From a phenomenological perspective researchers are part and parcel of the social world they seek to investigate.”* When the researcher interprets data, he/she needs to be *aware* of the way in which he/she is making judgement on the materials, and he/she needs to minimize the personal assumptions and biases.

Since phenomenology is an analytical methodology, I will next compare and contrast Husserlian/descriptive analytical process and Heideggerian/hermeneutic analytical process.

#### **3.2.4.2 Descriptive phenomenology**

Existential phenomenology seeks a descriptive understanding of participant experiences from participant's perspectives (Pollio, Henley and Thompson, 1997). Moustakas (1994) explains the process of obtaining the phenomenological goal, i.e. the essence of the participant's experiences. In phenomenological understanding of lived experiences, how we obtain the essence of those experiences is crucial. Descriptive phenomenology has been instigated by Husserl (Marion, 1998; Smith, 2003; Russell, 2006), and it has been expanded and disseminated by Giorgi (1985) as a credible research methodology.

Moustakas (1994) explains the analytical process of descriptive phenomenology. He quotes Husserl's (1970) *“Logical Investigations”*,

*“We must exclude all empirical interpretations and existential affirmations, we must take what is inwardly experienced or otherwise inwardly intuited (e.g. in pure fancy) as pure experiences .... We thus achieve insights in pure*



*phenomenology which is here oriented to real constituents, whose descriptions are in every way 'ideal' and free from...presupposition of real existence" (1970, p. 577).*

Moustakas thus divides Husserlian analytical process into 4 stages.

1. *Époche*: Setting aside prejudgments and opening the research interview with an unbiased, receptive presence.

2. *Phenomenological Reduction*

Here, the task is that of describing in textural language just what one sees, not only in terms of the external object but also the internal act of consciousness, the experience as such, the rhythm and relationship between phenomenon and self.

3. *Imaginative variation*

The task of this step is to seek possible meanings through the utilization of imagination, varying the frames of reference, employing polarities and reversals, and approaching the phenomenon from divergent perspectives, different positions, roles, or functions.

4. *Synthesis* of composite textural and composite structural descriptions

Intuitively and reflectively integrate the composite textural and composite structural descriptions to develop a synthesis of the meanings and essences of the phenomenon or experience. *"This is the guiding direction of the eidetic sciences, the establishment of a knowledge of essences."* (Husserl, 1931, p. 44)

Moustakas (1994) says that understanding nature, meanings, and essences of above processes is necessary in order to conduct phenomenological research. The aim of this methodology is for investigating human experience and for deriving knowledge from a state of pure consciousness. Husserl (1931) asserts that *"The aim is to arrive at structural descriptions of an experience, the underlying and precipitating factors that account for what is being experienced; in other words the 'how' that speaks to conditions that illuminate the 'what' of experience."* Husserl's quest is to describe *"how did the experience of the phenomenon come to be what it is?"* Husserl aims to achieve this knowledge by imagination and eidetic, transcendental intuition. His aim is to describe the pure conscious experiential essences. Giorg (1985) inherits and continues the above Husserlian analytical methodology, hence his method is called descriptive phenomenology.

As I described above, *'pure consciousness'* is not the main medium for my study of lived experiences. The self through yoga practice would, I envisage, involve embodiment, and Dasein (being-with-others). I need a more open and multilayered approach which would enable me to study phenomenological understanding of 'the self' in lived world for yoga practitioners, as I believe 'consciousness' is only a part of lived experience of the world.

### **3.2.4.3 Hermeneutic phenomenology**

Van Manen (2002a, p. 249) asserts that *'sense of wonder'* is at the heart of the phenomenological attitude. And this elusiveness of wonder raises epistemological issues and ontological issues. He says that if we understand the phenomenological method not as a controlled set of procedures but more modestly as a *'way towards human understanding'* then we need to find a way to it. For this point, Heidegger (1962) insists that phenomenology is a hermeneutic methodology, i.e. a method of interpretation.

Heidegger (1962, p. 46) explains that with *'cogito ergo sum'* Descartes (1912, original work published in 1637) had claimed that he was putting philosophy on a new and firm footing. From Heidegger's point of view, Descartes ignored one's sense of being as a whole, and that is what phenomenology is addressing. Heidegger (1962, p. 62) writes,

*"With regard to its subject matter, phenomenology is the science of the Being of entities – ontology...Our investigation itself will show that the meaning of phenomenological description as a method lies in interpretation...The phenomenology of Dasein is a hermeneutic in the primordial signification of this word, where it designates this business of interpreting."*

About hermeneutic methodology, Dreyfus (1987; 1991) explains the difference between Husserl and Heidegger in their approaches to the methodology. Dreyfus (1991, p. 2) says that Heidegger developed his hermeneutic phenomenology in opposition to Husserl's transcendental phenomenology. Husserl (1970) explains that the human sciences failed because they did not take into account intentionality – the way the individual mind was treated as object. Husserl developed an account of man as essentially a consciousness with self-contained meanings, which he called intentional

content. Heidegger countered that there was a more basic form of intentionality than that.

At the foundation of Heidegger's new approach is a phenomenology of *das Man*, 'mindless' everyday coping skills as the basis of all intelligibility. According to Dreyfus (ibid.), Heidegger calls this more fundamental way of making sense of things our understanding of being, he claims that he is doing ontology, i.e. asking about the nature of this understanding of being that we do not know, but that we simply are. In this respect, Heidegger breaks with Husserl and Cartesian tradition by asking ontological questions concerning "*what sort of beings we are.*"

Therefore, there are two problems with descriptive phenomenology for me; the first one concerns the impossibility of '*epoché*' (bracketing-off) at the first stage, and the second one is the '*goal*' of '*pure consciousness*' at the last stage. The research question I am trying to answer is not metaphysical pure consciousness but it concerns the bodily awareness of the self. Thus, hermeneutic, or interpretive understanding of phenomena becomes more relevant for my study than descriptive phenomenology.

### ***3.2.5 Methodological problem with design***

Pollio, Henley and Thompson (1997) warn about the negative effects of excessive concern with methodology. Their concern arises from the way in which phenomenological themes function interpretatively, and the criterion of validity becomes whether a reader would be able to see the textual evidence supporting the interpretation, and whether the goal of providing a first person understanding is attained (ibid.).

As there seems to run a considerable risk of becoming arbitrary in interpretation, there is the important issue of triangulation to increase credibility for this methodology. It requires careful application of extensive reflexivity. From this point of view, a phenomenological approach is not a stand-alone methodology, it may need to be combined with other theoretical ideas to enrich the final findings. Similarly, Maggs-

Rapport (2000a) and DeSouza (2002) encourage the use of multiple methodologies to increase its trustworthiness.

Therefore, data triangulation may consist of a combination of various methods, e.g. in-depth interviews, questionnaires for factual information, participant observations, interview and research diaries, and information gathering through relevant publications and web-sites.

For the interpretive process, I believe my being foreign and having different perspectives on yoga, can be of use in being more reflexive in the interpretive process, and help me to understand the British yoga practitioner's lived experiences.

### **3.3 Summary**

In this chapter, I firstly considered qualitative methodology. I then described the reasons why I did not wish to use ethnography or BNIM, and explained the reasons why I chose hermeneutic phenomenology for the research methodology.

I also discussed the differences between descriptive phenomenology and hermeneutic phenomenology, and explained why I rejected the former. Lastly, I considered the shortcomings of the phenomenological approach, arbitrariness, and suggested the use of multiple methods to reduce bias.

In the next chapter, I shall describe in detail hermeneutic phenomenological methods in context, i.e. its design, the actual step-by-step data collection and research analysis.

## 4. Hermeneutic Phenomenological Methods in context

### 4.1. Introduction

The research question for this study is to find out the nature of *the self* of yoga practitioners. The outcomes of the study should reveal a better understanding of modern British yoga practitioners and their relationship to everyday ‘*lived*’ life, including who the practitioners are, what they do and how they feel, what the practice means to the individuals, how the practice helps them to overcome their life crises, and how they relate yoga to the meaning of their lives.

As the title of this thesis indicates the data I used was narratives of ‘*lived experience*’, and I planned to use an open-ended interview method for data collection. By taking an open-ended, in-depth one-to-one interviewing method, I intended to gather practitioners’ individual and subjective narratives about their innermost feelings and reflections on their lives and yoga practice.

In this chapter, I explain and explore hermeneutic phenomenological methods in context, i.e. data collection and data analysis. It is divided into two parts: the first part relates to **general** aspects of the methods in the context of this study, including ethical issues in research which concerns informed consent, confidentiality and research consequences. The second part is about the **actual** step-by-step data collection and analysis, and an outline of the research group. I evaluate the use of the qualitative research software ATLAS.ti for the analytical application and management of data, and I also consider the research trustworthiness and transparency.

### 4.2. Theoretical issues of research design

According to Denscombe (2003, p. 3), there is no ‘one right’ direction to take. But, there are some strategies for tackling specific issues. In practice, he says that good social research is a matter of ‘horses for courses’, where approaches are selected because they are appropriate for specific aspects of investigation and specific kinds of problems. However, the choices must be reasonable and they should be written down explicitly to maintain transparency of research.

My main research method was to analyse interview transcripts of lived experiences of yoga practitioners, and the use of interview method for this research was chosen because it could provide (1) detailed information; (2) indepth data based on emotions, experiences and feelings; (3) data based on sensitive, delicate issues and face-to-face approach is required (Denscombe, 2003, pp. 164-5).

I now look into the basic principles of the interviewing process. The methods I employed will be described further below.

#### ***4.2.1 Overview for the data collection***

Here are some of the important points during the data collection:

- (1) I take multiple data collection methods for research rigour; that is I need to keep taking field notes, interview diaries and research diaries.
- (2) I keep the research question in mind, and avoid confusion; I needed to focus interviews on yoga practice and related issues.
- (3) I stay alert, and avoid trouble, or deal with any problems arising from the interviewing process.
- (4) I record new discoveries during data collection as possible emergent themes.

#### ***4.2.2 Interview forms***

There are different forms of interviews, e.g. seeking factual information, opinions and attitudes, narratives and life stories, etc. Flick (2002) lists semi-structured and open-structured interview methods for qualitative research. The difference between them is the degree of control exercised by the researcher over the nature and length of the responses allowed during the interview. The qualitative research interview is more likely to be semi-structured, or even unstructured, and often a semi-structured interview has a focus on a 'topic' (Flick, 2002). In this study, the topic is yoga practice. I decided to use a semi-structured interview and rejected use of unstructured or structured, because, I hoped that participants would narrate more freely on the topic of yoga with a semi-structured interview. The reasons are described below.

### ***Semi-structured interviews and the use of an interview guide***

Concerning the use of an interview guide, Kvale (1996) says that an interview guide indicates the topics and their sequence in the interview. For the semi-structured type of interview, the guide contains an outline of topics to be covered, with open-ended questions. Each interview question should be relevant to the research theme. With good interview questions a researcher can build a good rapport and produce a successful interview interaction. Flick (2002) similarly emphasises the use of an interview guide, and sums up the role of an interview guide as a strategy to avoid confusion in the interview situation. I sought advice from my supervisor on the semi-structured questions and discussed possible issues in advance. The aim was to draw out spontaneous descriptions from the participants. (A copy of the interview guide that I used is in the appendices.)

Concerning more practical tactics for interviews, Denscombe (2003, p. 180) suggests using the following useful techniques:

*Prompts*; for instance, the researcher remains silent, repeats the question, repeats the last few words spoken by the informant.

*Probe*; the researcher asks for an example, asks for clarification, asks for more details.

*Check*; the researcher summarizes their thoughts.

The researcher must also respect the rights of the interviewee/participant. This means sometimes accepting if a participant simply does not wish to tell you something, and knowing when to back off and withdraw if the discussion is causing the participant particular embarrassment or distress.

#### ***4.2.3 How many participants do I need?***

Kvale (1996) recommends interviewing as many participants as is necessary to find out what you need to know. The number of participants depends on the purpose of the study. According to Kvale (ibid.), the number of subjects in qualitative interview studies tends to be either too small or too large. If it is too small, it is not possible to get general ideas, or to find the differences between groups. If it is too big, then it is difficult to

extract deeper complex interpretations of the interviews. In Kvale's (1996, p. 103) view, the number of interviews tends to be around  $15 \pm 10$  in current interview studies, and this number may be due to a combination of availability of time and resources and of the law of diminishing returns. Harris (2005) interviewed 51 participants using the principles of grounded theory and stopped interviewing when saturation point was reached.

Polkinghorne (1989) also comments that the number of subjects selected for phenomenology-based studies varies considerably. At one end of the continuum is Van Kaam's (1969) use of 325 written descriptions from high-school students in his study on the experience of 'really feeling understood.' In the mid-range is Stevick's (1971) use of 30 interviews in her study of the experience of 'being angry' and Mruk's (1983) use of 25 descriptions of 'being pleased and displeased with self' in his study of self-esteem. Frances Maggs-Rapport (2001) interviewed 11 participants with van Manen's approach. An in-depth interview method required around 10-14 (Kvale, 1996) but other researchers manage bigger numbers (Nettleton, S. *et al.*, 2005a).

#### ***4.2.4 Sampling Methods***

Using Denscombe (2003)'s categorization for research methodology, I divided sampling techniques into two types: probability (statistical) sampling and non-probability sampling, which are described below. The former is more closely associated with quantitative, hypothesis-testing research. The latter is usually associated with a qualitative research, where the focus is upon choosing a sample that will help to explore the theoretical constructs being studied. However, this distinction is not that clear cut, and using multiple methods of sampling is often justifiable (Denscombe, 2003).

In addition, Denscombe (*ibid.*) stresses the importance of generating a sampling frame. This is an objective list, or description, of the population from which the sample will be drawn. This could be anything from the electoral register, an outpatient attendance list, the membership of a society, to a professional caseload, and so on. My data collection involves a number of local BWY members who are willing to participate.



### ***Selection of samples***

Polkinghorne (1989) points out that the participants are selected for phenomenological research because they are able to provide rich descriptions of the experience being investigated. The first requirement of selection is that the person has had the experience that is the topic of research. The second is that they have the capacity to provide full and sensitive descriptions of the experience under examination. Van Kaam (1969) proposes that this capacity requires participants to have six important skills: (a) the ability to express themselves linguistically with relative ease, (b) the ability to sense and to express inner feelings and emotions without shame and inhibition, (c) the ability to sense and to express the organic experiences that accompany these feelings, (d) the experience of the situation under investigation at a relatively recent date, (e) a spontaneous interest in their experience, and (f) the ability to express what was going on within themselves.

These skills require an environment where they can relax so that they are able to put sufficient time and orderly thought into the interview. Colaizzi (1978) similarly states that experience with the topic under investigation and the ability to articulate it suffice as criteria for selecting subjects. However, selecting enough participants is not straightforward, and requires skill and care.

### ***Selection procedures for participants***

The first decision concerning the selection of the participants is that, with individuals the first hurdle is accessibility and their willingness.

In research designs using a priori definitions of the sample structure, sampling decisions are taken either to select persons or groups of persons. However, this form of sampling restricts the developmental space of the theory in an essential dimension.

Flick (2002) describes that gradual strategies of sampling are mostly based on ‘*theoretical sampling*’ developed by Glaser and Strauss (1967). Decisions about choosing and putting together empirical material (i.e. cases, groups, institutions etc.) are made in the process of collecting and interpreting data. Glaser and Strauss (1967) explain that theoretical sampling is the process of data collection for generating theory

whereby the analyst jointly collects, codes and analyzes his/her data and decides what data to collect next and where to find them, in order to develop his/her theory as it emerges. This process of data collection is controlled by the **emerging theory**.

The next question is how to decide when to stop integrating further cases. Glaser and Strauss (1967, p. 67) suggest the criterion of '*theoretical saturation*' (of a category etc.). They explain that the criterion for judging when to stop sampling the different groups pertinent to a category is the category's theoretical saturation. Saturation means that no additional data are being found whereby the researcher can develop properties of the category. Sampling and integrating further material is finished when the 'theoretical saturation' of a category or group of cases has been reached, i.e. nothing new emerges anymore.

Flick (2002) describes gradual selection as a general principle in qualitative research. Comparing different conceptions of qualitative research in this respect shows that this principle of selecting cases and material has also been applied by Glaser and Strauss (1967). The basic principle of theoretical sampling is to select cases or case groups according to concrete criteria concerning their content instead of using abstract methodological criteria. Sampling proceeds according to the relevance of cases instead of their representativeness. This principle is also characteristic of related strategies of collecting data in qualitative research.

Flick (2002) says that sampling decisions cannot be made in isolation. The appropriateness of the structure and contents of the sample, and the strategy chosen, can only be assessed with respect to the research question of the study. Therefore, the decision between defining in advance and gradually developing the sample should be determined by the research question and the degree of generalization one is seeking.

At a more practical level, *Different sampling techniques* are suggested by Denscombe (2003). He divides sampling into two groups: **probability** and **non-probability** sampling. For probability sampling, sample size can be 'large' and will usually be pre-determined, and needs to be linked to the 'error rate' inherent to the data and measurements being used (Denscombe, 2003, p. 12).

When probability sampling is difficult, e.g. the intended sample size is small, or information about the research population is insufficient, non-probability sampling becomes useful. Non-probability sampling is often linked with qualitative research and its techniques stem from the idea that the research process is ‘discovery’ rather than ‘testing’ (Denscombe, 2003, p. 25). For this reason, non-probability sampling methods relevant to this study are discussed below.

### ***Non-probability sampling strategy***

#### **Sampling rationale** (Denscombe, 2003, p. 25)

- o ***Purposive:*** A sample that is “handpicked” for the research, i.e. cases that are seen as critical for the research.
- o ***Snowball:*** A sample that emerges through a process of recommendation, usually from one participant to the next.
- o ***Theoretical:*** An explicitly grounded theory approach to sampling, where emerging theory points to appropriate cases to be studied in the next phase of research.
- o ***Case selection:*** This can be in terms of extreme, typical, maximal variation and critical cases, etc.
- o ***Complete:*** Using criteria to define a particular sub-group, every case is selected.
- o ***Convenience:*** A poor basis for generating a sample, but still may be a major consideration in practice.

**Sample size:** This is usually ‘small’, and is not set in advance, but the study is completed when theoretical saturation has been reached, i.e. when further cases will offer little further theoretical insight.

According to this classification, a **snowball sampling** appeared to suit my research, as the hermeneutic phenomenological method required a certain type of participants who were articulate, and were expressive of their experiences and emotions with lesser inhibitions. During the interviewing process, I also needed to use **theoretical sampling**, so that I could interview a wide range of participants with different life experiences.

I expected that the benefits of snowball sampling were that it gave articulate participants, who were prepared to be interviewed. However, I also expected that the limitations of this sampling were that participants might be a narrow, biased group, and not a representative group of yoga practitioners as a whole. This possibility was carefully avoided by intentionally combining another method of sampling, theoretical sampling.

### ***Interviews in steps***

There are a number of steps to be taken for a skilful interview. Denscombe (2003) recommends paying attention to the following steps.

*Before the interview:* Contact a prospective participant and obtain his/her agreement for an interview. Then arrange the venue and time.

*For the interview:* allow time to relax for both parties and be ready with interview guide, information sheets, a consent form and tape recorder. Take field notes as parts of interview data.

*During the interview:* introduce oneself first. Then try to build trust and rapport by being attentive and sensitive to the participant's feelings. Give gentle encouragement when necessary but respect their right not to say anything.

*Ending the interview:* ask the participant if there are any issues to be raised. Thank him/her for participating the interview.

*After the interview:* make field notes of any impression of the interview.

These were basic procedures for the researcher to remember when interviewing.

### ***Transcribing interviews***

Following the interviews, the recorded narratives must be transcribed. Kvale (1996, p. 170) comments on transcribing that although there is no standard form or code for the transcription of research interviews, there are some standard choices to be made. They involve such issues as whether the statements should be transcribed verbatim, whether the interview should be transformed into a more formal, written style, or whether the transcriber should condense and summarize some of the parts that have little relevant information and so on.

Kvale (ibid.) explains that there are no correct, standard answers to such questions, and the answers will depend on the intended use of the transcript. One possible guideline for editing, to do justice to the interviewees, is to imagine how they themselves would have wanted to formulate their statements in writing. If they are to give some general impressions of the subjects' views, rephrasing and condensing statements may be in order. Also, if the analysis is to be in a form that categorizes or condenses the general meaning of what is said, a certain amount of editing of the transcription may be desirable. If, however, the transcriptions are to serve as material for sociolinguistic or psychological analysis, they need to be given in a detailed, verbatim form. However, this research was not sociolinguistic or psychological analysis, but phenomenological, i.e. its aim was to extract the essences of data. Therefore, a minimal amount of editing will be necessary to make the interview transcripts meaningful. After transcription, identifiers should be removed or disguised, and analysis can then be carried out on the transcript, not the tapes.

#### ***Verification of transcription***

Denscombe (2003) advocates checking the transcript *with the interviewee* where it is possible, to check if it accurately represents their statements. This is an opportunity to ensure that the facts are correct and that the interviewer has got correct information. On the other hand, Kvale (1996) expresses reservation that some subjects may experience shock as a consequence of reading their own interviews. The subjects may become offended and refuse to cooperate further, and withdraw their consent for the use of what they have said. The different rhetorical forms of oral and written language are frequently overlooked during the transcription of social science interviews. The problems with interview transcripts are written in spoken language expression which is quite different from literary expression of discourse. The issue of transcription will be considered further in a later section of this chapter.

#### ***4.2.5 The role of the researcher***

There are two issues to consider about the role of the researcher in interview situations. Firstly, Kvale (1996) explains that the researcher as a person plays a critical role in maintaining the quality of the scientific knowledge and the soundness of ethical

decisions in any research project, because the interviewer themselves is the main instrument for obtaining such knowledge. Thus, in interview situations, I as a person matter, since the interviewer becomes the medium for getting knowledge through interacting with the participants, and I must remain truthful and tactful. Secondly, the NMC code (2007) reminds the researcher that if there is any risk involving either the participants or the researcher because of partaking in research, he/she must report the concerns to management immediately, and take action to avoid any possible harm occurring. Being interviewed and talking about a very personal experience can be a positive, cathartic experience, but it could be a negative, traumatic experience too, and I, as the researcher, must stay alert for any sign of danger.

### **4.3. Ethical principles**

The importance of maintaining ethical principles for the integrity of the research is important for researchers. According to the Royal College of Nursing (RCN) (2009, web-site), ethical principles include: informed consent, confidentiality, data protection, right to withdraw, potential benefits and potential harm.

Similarly, the Nursing & Midwifery Council (NMC) (2007, web-site) states that their ethical guidelines provide a frame of reference for conduct, performance and ethics for nurses and midwives. The National Research Ethics Service (NRES) at the National Patient Safety Agency (NPSA) also emphasises the importance of transparency in the research process (2009).

Thus, it is essential to take ethical questions into consideration from the beginning of the data collection process, so that protecting the participants' confidentiality and ensuring no harm to them come as the priority.

#### ***4.3.1 General principles***

Similarly, Christians (2005) sums up four codes of ethics for social science research in general:

1. **Informed consent.** Proper respect for human freedom requires two conditions: Firstly, subjects must agree voluntarily to participate. Secondly, their agreement must be based on full and open information.
2. **Non-deception.** Social science codes of ethics uniformly oppose deception, and the research methods need to be morally acceptable.
3. **Protection of privacy and confidentiality.** Confidentiality must be assured as the primary safeguard against unwanted exposure, and all personal data ought to be secured and the anonymity of participants protected.
4. **Accuracy.** Ensuring that data are accurate is a cardinal principle.

Similar codes to those above are recommended by others. Denscombe (2003, p. 135) says that there are also *practical reasons* to protect research participants from possible harm caused by careless data collection and mishandling of data, as “*Protection of the public from the unscrupulous collection and use of data has become enshrined in legislation*” including data protection laws and human rights legislation.

Holloway and Freshwater (2007) recommend that researchers who involve participants should adhere to ethical principles of *guidelines and codes* set by their research institutes, and the application of such codes should be contextual. They stress that following appropriate codes of ethics is important for researchers in order to protect both the integrity of the research and the participants.

For this purpose, De Montfort University has set up a strict Code of Practice for Research Degree Students (2009). Under The Human Research Ethics Committee, codes of research ethics relating to research on humans identify the following principles:

(1) No harm to participants; (2) Informed consent; (3) No deception; (4) Avoid undue intrusion; (5) Confidentiality; (6) Anonymity; (7) Security.

All research students are required to obtain approval from the Faculty Human Research Committee prior to the beginning of data collection (ibid, pp. 53-55).

For research methods which involve interviews as does this study, Kvale (1996) stresses that there are ethical issues concerning each of the research stages. Following Kvale's (1996) suggestion, three ethical issues are considered below:

#### ***4.3.2 Informed Consent***

Informed consent is aimed at informing the research participants about the overall purpose of the investigation and the main features of the research project. It is vital that the content of the information sheet remains honest. However, it requires a careful consideration to decide how much information is given and how it is expressed in the written information sheets in order to avoid prejudgement and bias over the forthcoming interview. It is important that the participants be informed that their participation is voluntary, and that they have the right to withdraw from the study at any time. At De Montfort University, the Faculty Research Ethics Committee examines each research application form before the start in order to ensure that the researcher follows their guidelines.

#### ***4.3.3 Confidentiality***

Kvale (ibid.) writes that confidentiality in research means that any personal information which can identify the participants should not be in the public domain. When I write the study findings, it is vital to protect participants' privacy. The confidentiality and anonymity of the participants for this study should be protected by eliminating all the private names and indicators of personal identities.

#### ***4.3.4 Consequences***

The NMC's code of conduct (2007) states that protection of the rights, safety, dignity and well-being of participants is vital. Kvale (1996, p.116) comments that the consequences of an interview study should consider the balance between the possibility of any harm to the participants and the expected benefits of participating in the study. The researcher also needs to consider the responsibility of the possible consequences for each participant and for the larger group (the BWY) that they represent. If one listens carefully to the in depth narration of their experience, partaking in an interview can be a



satisfying experience for participants. In this way, taking part in the study can offer benefits to the participants provided that their confidentiality is protected and participation is voluntary.

#### **4.4. Data collection in steps: How I did it**

Out of the philosophy of phenomenology, psychologically-focused descriptive phenomenological methods have been developed and propagated by Giorgi (1985), and hermeneutic phenomenological methods have been developed and outlined by van Manen (1990), Benner *et al.* (1994) and Cohen *et al.* (2000).

However, there are common phenomenological analytical processes which they all share. As Maggs-Rapport (2001, p.151) describes, “*It is common practice in hermeneutic and descriptive phenomenological studies to adapt tried and tested phenomenological techniques to one’s own research questions.*” In this study, I followed hermeneutic analytical processes of phenomenological methods, but added my own variations so that the research questions I presented could be answered.

##### ***4.4.1 The design of data collection methods***

In this section, I describe how I actually collected data step by step.

The multiple data collection methods that I used were a combination of semi-structured interviews which were carried out over several months, my interview diaries and background information gathered from yoga practice in general, and existing yoga literature.

The data collecting process followed ‘theoretical saturation’, which is the way ground theory developed. Although the main methodology was hermeneutic phenomenology, some aspects of the ethnographic approach were also adopted in order to understand the wider cultural perspectives of human experiences (Spradley, 1979; Kuznar, 1996; Ellen, 1984; Ellis & Bochner, 1996), i.e. research diaries, field notes from attending Yoga classes, various publications and the BWY's web-site, and talking with other members of the BWY community. I also used the computer software programme ATLAS.ti to manage the data for analysis. Methodological pluralism has been encouraged in recent

years not only for triangulation, but also to enrich the study findings (Maggs-Rapport, 2000a, 2000b; DeSouza, 2002).

#### ***4.4.2 Ethical Guidelines***

In this study, I was obliged to follow De Montfort University's ethical guidelines, and sought approval from the faculty Human Research Ethics Sub-Committee for my research proposal. Their permission was obtained prior to the start of data collection. Following their guidelines, permission from the BWY chairperson to approach the BWY members was sought and obtained. (Copies of the approval letter from the Faculty Human Research Ethics Sub-Committee, and the permission letter from the chairperson of the BWY are attached in appendices.)

The guidelines also required me to give a sufficient level of written information for each participant about my research. I also had to obtain a consent form signed by each participant after they had read the information sheet.

The participants in this study were assured in the information sheet that they could withdraw from partaking at any time, and could ask for a copy of their own interview transcript. They were also informed that if they needed counselling as a consequence of the interview, help would be provided. (A copy of the approved information sheet is in appendices.)

#### ***4.4.3 Recruitment***

The participants were recruited among members of the local yoga groups who belonged to the BWY (the British Wheel of Yoga). The criteria for recruitment (van Kaam, 1969) were that the participants needed to be: (1) articulate enough to be able to express their thoughts and feelings, (2) reflexive enough to be able to examine their inner emotions, and (3) willing to undertake an interview for this study.

Initially, I wrote 3 letters to some active yoga-practicing members by selecting names from the BWY journal 'Spectrum', but received no answer. Then, one of the active teaching members of the local BWY branch was recommended by a yoga acquaintance.

Thus, I started the snowballing sampling process. I telephoned the person and explained the situation. She came back a few days later agreeing to be interviewed, and confirmed a date and place. The interview was carried out one afternoon at a private residence in a friendly atmosphere. She was friendly and talkative, although she was busy and had to leave soon afterwards. She then recommended 2 more people with whom an interview might be possible. Using this 'snow-balling' method, two further participants were contacted and interviewed successfully. Through recommendation, 4 more participants were contacted and interviewed. One teacher was keen to participate but had to withdraw because of the funeral of a family member. One participant, who was a long standing yoga teacher, asked in one of her yoga classes for some volunteers to be interviewed, and 5 students came forward and gave me contact addresses; they were interviewed individually later. In total, there were 13 participants with varying degrees of yoga experience. Then, realizing the diversity of their backgrounds, and using theoretical sampling, 2 more participants with different backgrounds were added to complete 15 interviews. When I felt that there was enough interview material, interviewing came to an end as it reached the saturation point.

#### ***4.4.4 Interviewing process***

At this point, I spent an intense period of data collection of approximately 4 months, (1) recruiting participants, (2) interviewing, (3) making transcripts, (4) reading and selecting themes, (5) reflecting on the themes, (6) adjusting the next questions, and repeating the same process, which was a part of a hermeneutic circle, continually reflecting on the methods and contents, until reaching saturation point.

I believed that the interview should take place where the participant felt comfortable. Therefore, they should decide on a place and time for the interview. As a result, most interviews took place at the private homes of the interviewees, or outdoors for convenience.

Before the interview began, the information sheet was given to the participants with a face-to-face explanation of its contents. Then, a consent form was signed voluntarily without exception.

#### ***4.4.5 Interview guide***

Framing this interview, a semi-structured interview guide was constructed after a discussion with my supervisor, covering potentially important questions later on. The interviewing process started with 10 open-ended questions. After conducting the first 2 interviews, two further questions were added to the list of questions as I realized the participants emphasized ‘the importance of the breath’ and ‘their yoga teachers’; and questions related to these issues were not included at first in the guide. I felt that there were new themes emerging, and wanted to explore them with the rest of the participants. (A copy of the interview guide is attached as Appendix 4).

The structure of the interview began with the interviewer asking to talk about the life story of the participant. By talking about their childhood memories, the participants became more reflective about their life experiences and feelings. Then, it continued with questions and encouragement from the interviewer. It was a very loosely semi-structured interview with open-ended questions, and it went with the flow, following important events, topics, issues etc. What distinguishes structured from semi-structured and unstructured interviews is the degree of control exercised by the researcher over the nature of the responses and the length of the answers allowed to the respondent (Denscombe, 2003, p. 167). I also asked participants to answer a questionnaire for certain factual matters (date of birth, duration of yoga practice, their particular yoga preference, starting place, profession, etc.) at the end, so that I could obtain factual information which might not come up during the interviews. A copy of the questionnaire is attached as Appendix 5.

#### ***4.4.6 Duration of interview***

From examples of other studies (Nettleton, et al, 2005a and 2005b; Cohen, et al, 2000) and my past experiences of interviewing, each interview was planned to be around one hour, but it was kept flexible so that the participant was able to take enough time to talk about their experiences. The reasons for this timescale were:

1. The participant could take their time to relax and talk without pressure.

2. If they wished to talk longer, or important topics came up, they could expand their talk.

3. If more than one hour was set out, the participant might feel overwhelmed.

One participant talked only for 20 minutes, the majority talked for 45 – 60 minutes, and 2 people talked for over 1 hour.

#### ***4.4.7 Interview materials***

The interviews were audio-tape recorded, after obtaining the consent of the participants. On one occasion, the battery of the tape-recorder ran out, but the remaining 2 questions were recorded in writing without any problem. The tapes were later transcribed by myself using a transcriber machine.

#### ***4.4.8 Transcription notations***

Styles of transcription method and notation were sought and considered in the texts from various studies carried out using interpretive phenomenological methodology (van Manen, 1990; Benner *et al.*, 1994; Cohen *et al.*, 2000). For instance, whether Silverman coding methods (Wengraf, 2001) were necessary for this study was considered and rejected. The main reason for not adopting Silverman coding was that the transcript should be read and be understood as a meaningful entity in order to extract the interviewee's phenomenological experiences. Another reason for rejecting this transcript style was that the research software 'ATLAS.ti' required a certain edited version of transcripts without a detailed description of the manner of speech (see 2 interview transcripts as examples in the appendices).

The transcripts were re-transcribed and edited to remove excess repetition and hesitation prior to feeding it into the qualitative software 'ATLAS.ti' for analysis as some 'editing' was a requirement for the program (di Gregorio, 2004). The participants' names and identity indicators had been removed from the data files before analysis. The individual transcripts were recorded with numbers instead of names in order to protect their anonymity. The tapes and related documents were labelled and kept in a locked safe for safekeeping. Tapes were destroyed at the end of the research.

#### ***4.4.9 Rationale for Data analysis***

Using van Manen's (1990, p. 94) '*selective or highlighting approach*', the meanings that yoga practitioners attached to their experiences of yoga practice, and the way in which their practice influenced and cultivated their sense of the self were highlighted, explicated and interpreted. As paradigm cases, the stages of thematic analysis were illustrated with 2 transcripts as pilot data analysis (see below, and also Appendices). Findings were shown thematically as suggested by van Manen in his hermeneutic phenomenological method (1990). By sorting out the initial thematic findings, more emergent essential themes were discovered and elaborated.

Although there have been extensive writings about phenomenology and its usefulness as a methodology, each phenomenologist takes a slightly different approach to analysis (Friman *et al.*, 2004; Van der Zalm & Bergum, 2000; Smith, 1999). Cohen *et al.* (2000, p. 76-7) provide practical advice for the hermeneutic phenomenology analytical process. Their method suggests:

1. Analysis begins during the interview, and possible labels for these meanings may begin to be constructed.
2. 'Immersing oneself in the data' until one becomes aware of its gestalt.
3. Data transformation or data reduction, which is similar to editing.
4. Line by line coding necessary for thematic analysis.
5. Thematic analysis, tentative theme names are written in the margin of the text.
6. Important phrases are underlined, and passages are labelled with the theme (code). Then, passages are cut out of the text.

7. Piles of passages with similar labels were made, and groups of text are sometimes subdivided into elements or categories. The passages are labelled together.

8. Some of the themes from the passages can be developed into a manuscript.

Other themes/categories that relate to the theme in question can emerge in the analysis.

9. In a large project, it may be useful to conduct a descriptive analysis of demographic data.

10. The process of writing and rewriting. The movement from identification and comparison of themes to a coherent picture of the whole occurs through this reflective process.

11. Field notes and relevant narratives are used to contextualize and clarify the themes from the interview data.

In the phenomenological approach, data analysis is an interpretation of the spoken phenomena. It is recommended to read repeatedly and analyse the data, with other researchers forming a collaborative group for researcher triangulation (van Manen, 1990; Maggs-Rapport, 2001; Flick, 2002). At stages 5 & 6, the collaborative group was formed with my two supervisors to read the two pilot transcripts, and exchanged ideas and suggestions over how to interpret and analyse the narratives of the lived experience.

In van Manen's (1990, p. 87) thematic analysis, he explains that, in a text, a theme we look for is as follows:

- (1) Theme is the experience of focus, of meaning, of point.
- (2) Theme formulation is at best a simplification.
- (3) Themes are not objects one encounters at certain points or moments in a text.
- (4) Theme is the form of capturing the phenomenon one tries to understand.

In order to extract themes from texts, van Manen suggests three approaches in '*Isolating Thematic Statement*' (1990, p. 92)

- (1) The wholistic or sententious approach;

In the wholistic approach we attend to the text as a whole and ask "*What sententious phrase may capture the fundamental meaning or main significance of the text as a whole?*" We then try to express that meaning by formulating such a phrase.

- (2) The selective or highlighting approach;

In the selective reading approach we listen to or read a text several times and ask, "*What statement(s) or phrase(s) seem particularly essential or revealing about the phenomenon or experience being described?*" These statement(s) we then circle, underline, or highlight.

- (3) The detailed or line-by-line approach.

In the detailed reading approach we look at every single sentence or sentence cluster and ask, “*What does this sentence cluster reveal about the phenomenon or experience being described?*”

As I aim to take a practical and realistic approach for analysis, the first wholistic approach appears too vague and arbitrary, and the third line-by-line approach is too time-consuming and not practically applicable for the volume of my interview texts. Consequently, I chose the second selective / highlighting approach as the most useful one for the data analysis of this study.

According to van Manen, theme analysis refers to the process of recovering the theme or themes that are embodied and dramatized in the evolving meanings and imagery of the work. He divides the process into stages (1990, p. 79; Maggs-Porter, 2001, p. 182). The ‘Selective/highlighting approach’ divides its stages into four:

1. Searching for ‘structures of experience’;
2. Describing how structures of experience are thematic of the phenomenon;
3. Searching for essential and incidental themes;
4. Explication and interpretation of essential and incidental themes.

#### ***4.4.10 Process of analysis for this study***

By considering the above examples, I produced the following analytical procedures loosely based on Cohen et al’s data analysis steps except step 4, replacing it with the van Manen’s (1990, p. 94) ‘selective/highlighting approach’ described above. Using van Manen’s approach above, the meanings yoga practitioners give to their experiences of yoga practice, and the ways in which their practice influences and cultivates their sense of the self are highlighted, explicated and interpreted. In order to illustrate the process, vignettes of thematic analysis are shown below. Emergent themes were also shown thematically as it was suggested by van Manen in his hermeneutic phenomenological methods (1990, pp. 77-80). By sorting out initial thematic findings, more emergent essential themes were discovered and elaborated. The initial pilot analyses were integrated into the whole study later. Information from field notes was integrated gradually at the last stage.



**Thus, the following process was constructed to analyse the data.**

1. Listen to interview tapes as the recording progresses, pick up the major themes, and explore further these themes with interviewees. If necessary, add more questions for interviewees to explore.
2. Transcribe the interview tapes and edit them in order to load the ATLAS.ti software. Editing here means that the transcripts should be tidied up, removing excessive stuttering and habitual “oh”, ‘erm’ noises.
3. Read the first interview transcript a minimum of 3 times, in order to get the overall ‘feeling’ or ‘gestalt’, consciously avoiding any personal presuppositions.
4. Extract and analyse the themes and divide them into major themes and minor themes.
5. From the transcripts, highlight the passages and codes using ATLAS.ti for each major theme.
6. Condense/describe and re-write highlighted quotations into the researcher’s expression as interpretive/hermeneutic process, and gradually the central themes emerge.
7. Relate and cluster the quotations and codes into a meaningful organization for each major theme.
8. Summarize the themes, and go back to the transcribed texts to validate, and modify the summary, then improve it.
9. Synthesize the first interview themes with other data, i.e. the researcher’s diaries and the record of the participant’s information from the questionnaires.
10. Discussion with other researchers as a pilot analysis. Two interview materials are discussed in depth using the transcripts and the highlighted quotations.
11. Further and deeper analysis by the researcher in accordance with the research questions in mind.

**By using the above process, the following was what actually happened.**

### **Step 1, interviewing and extracting first themes**

At an early stage during the interviews, I noticed that participants placed an important self developmental meaning on the breath, and their own view towards life with yoga practice. So, after the 2nd interviewee, new questions were added to the interview frame to explore the participants' view on these aspects of yoga practice. Transcription of interviews 1-7 with mostly yoga teachers, and thematic analysis on them were carried out, and tentative major emergent themes were identified as follows.

*With **Yoga teachers participants 1 – 7***

Tentative major themes

1. The participant's health and well-being concerning yoga practice.
2. The relationships with family and the practitioner concerning yoga are varied.
3. The relationships with other people and yoga practice.
4. The sense of self and yoga practice, development of theory of life.
- 5, Yoga practice is a part of personal development, a part of life which enriches its quality.
- 6: Yoga practice is good, but it is not a big deal.
7. My achievement in yoga community gives satisfaction.
8. The importance of the breath – it mediates the body with the inner self.
9. I don't need a guru, I take what I need from anyone.
10. Yoga is my profession.

However **yoga student participants 8 – 13** illustrated very different dimension/attitudes to yoga practice. 5 more emergent themes were added below.

After analysing the transcripts, further two interview participants 14-15 were added.

Participant 14 was also a member of a guru-oriented yoga school, Kripalu Yoga, and participant 15 knew the local history of yoga development. Both participants provided the extra depth and dimension to my understanding.

11. The new spirituality for modern Yoga practitioners.
12. Notable knowledge gap in yoga between individuals.
13. Yoga practice is the source of my energy.
14. Scepticism towards yoga's so called spiritual benefit and other virtues.

15. Yoga is my saviour.

### **Step 2, transcribing and editing the tapes**

The rest of audio-recorded interview tapes were transcribed, and personal identity indicators were removed. The transcripts were then edited carefully to tidy the spoken records into meaningful and analyzable texts without damaging the original interviewee's narratives.

### **Step 3, reading the transcripts repeatedly to get the 'gestalt'**

### **Step 4, extracting and analysing the themes**

After considering the above 15 themes carefully, they were regarded as 15 major themes, because they were all significant in some ways.

### **Step 5, highlighting the passages and codes using the ATLAS.ti software**

The transcripts were processed by the software, each participant's transcript was analysed passage by passage, and meaningful quotations for each theme were selected. Adapting the document to ATLAS.ti, with which the researcher followed the procedure below.

1. To present 2 cases for pilot analysis, I chose the first participant and the second participant interview scripts for convenience.
2. I edited the 2 documents for ATLAS.ti, and loaded them onto the system.
3. I selected suitable passages as quotations. Quotations from the transcripts were underlined.
4. Highlighted/selected shorter passages for coding.
5. I chose open codes (short) which extracted the essence of the experience.
6. I added comments to the selected passages.
7. I added memos (longer) to the selected passages.
8. I established a family of codes, and a hierarchy of codes, then illustrated the hierarchical mappings of the codes.

**Step 6, condensing/describing and re-writing highlighted quotations in the researcher's words**, which were relevant to the research question, i.e. the central themes were decided.

Some examples of step 5, 6 and 7 of data analysis are briefly illustrated as follows:

### **Interview**

*because it was the 60s and very hippy kind of times, love and peace and I was very much a hippy, and I started to go to a yoga class.*

Code: starting yoga

Description: being young, a hippy and yoga in the 1960s.

Explication: yoga was a fashionable thing to do then.

Interpretation: The New Age Movement influenced her starting yoga and her idea of spirituality.

*it's a bodily thing because that's what the postures are there for, but it transcends the body, eventually it has to go up into the mind, it has to become a spiritual philosophy.*

Code: Yoga & spirituality

Description: Yoga practice starts with the body, then progresses into the mind and transcends to become spiritual.

Explication: She believes that yoga progresses from bodily to mental and spiritual practice.

Interpretation: Yoga is progressive, and should become a spiritual philosophy one lives by.

### **Interview 2**

*I find that for my bad neck that yoga has helped me tremendously with that, it makes me more aware of it. I worked out which postures I can do to help it and I can keep it free and fairly painless and I mean it stiffens up all the time so I'm always doing stretching and the forward flight I find is the best for me. When you're standing, hands behind your back and you go [demonstrates]. That one, I do it everyday. And everyday it goes 'click'.*

Code: yoga and health

Description: She explains that for her neck pain, yoga postures like forward flight help keep her pain at bay.

Explication: Her practical yoga knowledge helps alleviate her pain.

Interpretation: Therapeutic yoga knowledge provides empowerment over her painful body.

*I don't think yoga is the be and end all, I think we must do what we like, and if you like yoga then, then you'll enjoy it and that's fine and if you'd rather go and play tennis that's fine too. So if somebody said "Oh well I couldn't do it", that's fine, do whatever you want to do. I have my little class, if anybody wants to come, they're welcome, if they don't that's ok too. So that's my sort of attitude really around it, I'm, I don't mind.*

Code: yoga teaching

Description: She explains her attitude that yoga is not everything, and one should just enjoy the things one wants to do.

Explication: The best way to be happy in a class is "let it be".

Interpretation: Her self-development is at the stage where she arrived at resolution.

**Step 7** was to organize and rearrange the above quotations and codes for each major theme to make sense. This task was done using ATLAS.ti's ability to group together the related codes and quotations according to their hierarchical order, and search relevant comments and memos.

**Step 8** was to summarize the emergent themes, then read the transcripts for validation, go back to improve the summary and repeat the circular process.

**Step 9** was to add other data to the interview themes and integrate them together.

Step 8 and 9 were circular processes of abstracting the essence of phenomena, and they have been tedious and time-consuming. The emergent themes were extracted, expressions and emphases were altered, or discarded, and reorganized. At the end of abstracting the essential themes, six major overarching themes emerged, as important and relevant to the research questions.

**Step 10** was taking place while I was working on steps 8 and 9. This step was to have a discussion with other research co-ordinates as a pilot analysis to ensure the steps I was taking were appropriate and relevant for the aim of my study. My two supervisors attended and the interview materials, some of which are shown above, were discussed in depth using the transcripts and the highlighted quotations and codes. The processes of emerging themes were discussed on several occasions, and my supervisors' advice was appreciated.

Following the process of data analysis described above, **the essential themes** listed in the next page were sorted and reorganized into 6 over-arching themes. These 6 themes were all important major themes. Some of the key expressions and relevant key issues I picked up from the transcripts were apportioned for each theme. Then, the six emergent themes finally emerged through hermeneutic circle.

These 18 early emergent themes are illustrated into the grid below for easy reference. The relevant themes have more numbers of 'yes' in the narratives of participants.

**Figure 2: Thematic grid (T stands for theme, P stands for participant, Y is for yes, N is for no, s.y is for small yes, E is for expert)**

	Participant A	P.B	P.C	P.D	P.E	P.F	P.G	P.H	P.I	P.J	P.K	P.L	P.M	P.N	P.O
Theme1	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	y/n	Y	Y	Y	Y
2	Y	Y	Not explicit	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	s.y	Y	Y	Y	Y
3	Y	Y	No	Y	Y	Y	Y	s.y	s.y	Y	N	y/n	?	Y	Y
4	Y	Y	N	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	N	Y	Y	Y	Not explicit
5	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	s.y	s.y	Y	N	s.y	Y	Y	Y
6	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	?	Y?	N	Y	Y	Y	Y
7	N	N	Y	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	Y	N	N	N	N
8	s.y	N	N	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	N	N	N	N	s.y	Y
9	Y	N	N	N	N	Y	N	N	N	N	N	N	n	Y	Y
10	Expert	E	Semi-expert	Super-e	E	Super-e	E	Semi-novice	Novice	Nov	No v	S-n	S-e	E	S-e
11	Y	Y	Open	Y	O	O	O	Y	O	O	O	O	Y	Y	Y
12	Y	N	?	?don't go	?	?	Y	?	y/n	?	?	Y	?don't go	?	?
13	Y	y/n	s.y	Not explicit	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	N	N	N	Y	s.y
14	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
15	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	y/n	Y
16	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	?	Y	Y	Y	Y
17	N	N	s.n	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	Y	N	N	N	N
18	catholic	non-specific	n-s	n-s	n-s	n-s	n-s	n-s	catholic	hindu	n-s	n-s	buddhist	n-s	n-s

These six major themes will be explored in more details in the next two chapters.

#### ***4.4.11 The six emergent themes***

The way I conducted hermeneutic phenomenological analysis was described in the previous section. After reading and reorganizing many times, the six overarching themes emerged. The 18 early emergent themes which were combined and integrated into overarching larger themes were listed with numbers.

#### ***HEALTH & WELL BEING***

1. Yoga practice was important for regaining health and improving well-being.
2. The importance of the breath – it mediates the body with the inner self.
3. Yoga practice was beneficial physically and mentally.

#### ***MANAGEMENT OF LIFE CRISES***

4. Practicing yoga helped to overcome one's difficulties in life.

#### ***SENSE OF SELF & YOGA DEVELOPMENT***

5. Yoga practice helped to develop the sense of self and a theory of life.
6. Yoga practice was a part of personal development, a part of life which enriched its quality.
7. Yoga practice was good, but it was over-rated.
8. Achievement in the yoga community gave satisfaction to some participants.
9. Yoga was one's profession/occupation.
10. There were significant knowledge gaps between groups.

#### ***CAM & GP***

11. If participants have other CAM (Complementary and Alternative Medicine) experiences.
12. Some participants found GPs (General Practitioners) to be helpful/unhelpful.

#### ***RELATIONSHIPS***

13. Yoga practice helped family relationships.
14. Yoga practice helped to improve relationships with other people.



## ***SPIRITUALITY***

15. There was no need for a guru.
16. There were talks about new spirituality for modern yoga practitioners.
17. There was an expression of scepticism towards yoga's so called spiritual benefit and other virtues.
18. Participants' self claimed religious status.

### **4.5. Summary of the research group**

This section presents the interview participants in the following order:

1. An outline of the group
2. General characteristics of the group
3. An outline of the individuals

#### ***4.5.1 An outline of the group***

The BWY had an 8,500 membership in 2008 (This information was given by the central office). The interview participants were 15 yoga practitioners who were members of the BWY. They were recruited by the snowballing and theoretical sampling methods from the London region of the BWY.

In order to describe the profile of the participants as a group, I divided the biographical data of the members into the following components (see the figure below).

**Figure 3: Demographic information of the participants based on self-report  
(Personal ID indicators are deleted)**

	Yoga Status	Occupation with yoga	Qualification	First Yoga practice
Teacher A	Teacher	F-t (full-time) yoga teacher	BWY Diploma	1960, 1979 A-E class
Teacher B	Teacher	P-t teacher.	Diploma. others	1975 A-E class
Teacher C	Teacher, but not teaching	none	Diploma	1978 A-E class
Tutor D	DCT Teacher	DCT. P-t teacher	Diploma, DCT	1965 A-E class
Teacher E	Teacher	P-t teacher	Diploma BA	1979 A-E class
Tutor F	DCT Teacher	F-t yoga teacher	Diploma, DCT	1981 A-E class
Teacher G	Teacher	P-t teacher	Diploma BA, MA PGCE	1970 TV programme
Learner H	Student	BWY- committee member	MBA	1990 Private class
Learner I	Student	none	BA PGCE	1995 A-E class
Learner J	Student	none	BA	1983 at school
Learner K	Student	none	B. Eng	2006 April Private class
Learner L	Student	none	O levels	2001 Hospital
Student-teacher M	Student-teacher	P-t teacher trainee	RGN	1990 Private class
Teacher N	Teacher	F-t teacher	BA Diploma	1972 A-E class
Ex Tutor O	Ex-DCT Ex-teacher	Retired teacher Retired DCT	Diploma DCT	1960 A-E class

#### ***4.5.2 General characteristics of the group***

As a result of the snowballing and theoretical sampling with the small number of participants, it is not possible to determine whether the interviewees for this study reflect an average group of typical yoga practitioners. However, it is useful to clarify the characteristics of this group.

***Yoga skill statuses:***

With 15 practitioners, there were 5 yoga teachers with a diploma, 3 DCTs (Diploma Course Tutors) and 1 teacher trainee. The remaining 6 were yoga class learners. Among them, 2 diploma holders were currently not teaching. Therefore, they were divided into three different groups.

1. Super-expert: 3 DCTs were qualified yoga teachers' teachers;
2. Expert: 9 yoga teachers with diplomas form the majority of the group;
3. Trainee teacher to beginner: 6 learners who range from trainee teacher to beginner with a few months experience.

***Gender:***

There were 3 men and 12 women practitioners. It was not possible to say if it was a typical gender ratio in the BWY from this study because data relating to gender are not available. Women practitioners tend to outnumber their male counterparts in the majority of yoga practicing groups in the West (Newcombe, 2008), and the BWY seems to be no exception as I have been able to observe for a long time. However, there have been a number of male gurus in guru orientated international yoga schools, and there have been a dedicated number of yoga teachers who have been trained by male gurus. This gender gap has appeared to be undergoing a change since yoga teaching became an alternative livelihood and occupation, or a business enterprise (Singleton and Byrne, 2008).

***Age group:***

The age-range was quite wide within the group, going from the 30s to the 80s.

***Nationalities:***

Nationalities were by self-declaration in this study. 2 practitioners were Irish, 9 were British, 1 was Spanish, 1 was British Jamaican, 1 was Indian, and 1 was French. These various nationalities might reflect the characteristics of the location of the research area, i.e. the North West region of London, which is largely suburbia. London itself has a highly internationally mixed population, and the local region is no exception. However, whether the makeup of the nationalities in this group was representative of

the BWY branch was not clear as, again, the BWY could not produce demographic information.

***Religion:***

Self declared religiosity was strikingly secular, as only 4 participants explicitly claimed a religious orientation. 2 practitioners mentioned a Catholic upbringing, 1 practitioner claimed to be a Hindu, 1 practitioner said to be a practicing Buddhist, and 11 practitioners did not claim any specific orientation towards religion. However, those nonreligious practitioners expressed ‘spirituality’ as an important element of life.

***Educational qualifications:***

There were 3 qualified nurses, and 6 participants had degrees and further qualifications.

***Yoga teaching:***

3 practitioners were full-time yoga teachers, 4 were part-time yoga teachers, 7 had jobs other than yoga teaching, and 2 were retired.

***Duration of yoga practice:***

The length of participants’ yoga practice was varied as 2 practitioners had 0.5~10 years’ experience, 3 had 11~20 years, 5 had 21~30 years, 3 had 31~40 years, and 2 had 41~50 years’ experience. The bigger group (33%) had 21 – 30 years’ experience, which means that they started yoga around 1977 – 1987.

***The place of learning:***

9 practitioners started at local Adult Education (A-E) classes, and 3 practitioners started with private classes. Only 1 started at school in India, 1 was introduced to yoga at a hospital as a therapeutic activity, and 1 practitioner began by watching a yoga TV programme in the 1970s, and moved to a local Adult Education class later on. These trends in yoga teaching practice will be discussed in depth in chapter 5, as they signify the shifting nature of yoga practice following the change in the social and political climate.

#### ***4.5.3 An outline of the individual participants***

I outline here the individual participants, as their life trajectories were important information for this study. (Some specific information which may indicate personal identification is excluded.)

**Teacher A:** She first practised yoga around 1960, but she did not continue. She later worked in London and married. A few years after, her husband became ill. As she needed to maintain and support her strength mentally and physically, she decided to return to yoga in the late 1970s. She took a BWY teacher training course and qualified in the mid-1980s. She was also trained as a yoga therapist. She taught 15 classes a week. She believed that yogic breathing was important for health and peace of mind. She was known as a warm, caring teacher by her students.

**Teacher B:** She started yoga in the 1970s when her eldest son was 6 months old, with a local BWY teacher. She qualified as a BWY teacher in the 1990s. She had been teaching 2 – 3 yoga classes locally since that year, and enjoyed teaching yoga very much. She liked to have a variety of work integrated into her life and she went to various yoga teachers. She had cancer and used yoga techniques to recover in the early 2000s. She felt she was happy and satisfied with how her life turned out (See her interview transcript in appendices).

**Teacher C** was born in the 1950s, and had a happy childhood. She met her husband, got married and had a family. After her second son was born, she started yoga about 1978. When her father died around 1988, she went through a difficult period, and studying to become a BWY teacher helped to mitigate the pain of loss. She and her husband ran a family business, so she had not been teaching or practicing yoga. She did not consider herself a dedicated yoga practitioner, but she hoped to reduce her working hours soon, and start to do things she enjoyed, such as yoga, drawing, tennis, and dance.

**Tutor D** was born in the 1930s. She started nurse training at 18. She got married and had children while she had a part time job. After she had the second child, she started

going to a yoga class in the 1960s. Then she did a BWY teacher training course and qualified, she had been teaching privately ever since. She became involved with the BWY organization, and became a regional officer, yoga event organizer, and other roles with the BWY. She still held a post in the region committee. She actively taught yoga for other yoga teachers. She felt meditation was important, and went to meditation retreats regularly. She felt pleased with her achievement for the BWY.

**Teacher E** was born in the 1940s. She had a happy, easygoing childhood. At the end of university studies, she got married and became a school teacher. They bought a house in the suburbs and had a family. After her third child was born, she went to a local yoga course to relieve stress and found it suited her. She did BWY teacher training, started teaching in 1990, and still taught 2 private classes. She regularly went to Yoga workshops. Yoga practice was an important part of her life. She considered her life to be transformed through yoga. She felt healthy and happy in life. (See her interview transcript in appendices)

**Tutor F** was born in the 1950s. She was a rebel and fat in her teens. She met her husband and married later. After having 2 children, she started to go to a yoga class in the 1980s, to relieve the stress at home. A few years later, she decided to train as a BWY teacher. She started to teach with the local Adult Education and continued until 2005. She qualified in the 1990s, became a professional yoga teacher, and she was teaching 12 classes involving 150 students a week when interviewed. The classes were mostly with private health clubs, private companies, and the NHS sector. She also became a DCT and started to help teaching a diploma teacher training course. She felt she had been very lucky to have a profession she loved.

**Teacher G** was born in the 1930s. She went to university, and did a PGCE afterwards. She taught at various schools and colleges for a few years. Then she studied child development and education while she worked in a primary school in order to get teaching experience with young children. After that she taught at a college, she met her husband, and married and had her first child. In the meantime, she watched and followed a TV yoga programme run by Richard Hittleman in 1970, which she found

very interesting and helpful to reduce the stress of a busy life. Later, she started going to a yoga class, and joined a BWY teacher training course in the early 1980s; she started teaching in A-E classes and became involved with the local yoga committee. Her husband suddenly died some years ago, but yoga helped her when she went through a difficult period of grieving. She felt the spiritual side of life more as she became older. She still taught a small numbers of classes privately.

**Learner H** was born abroad in the 1940s. His father was very strict and his mother was gentle. He had an illness when he was young, which changed his life in many ways. After graduating, he found a job and moved abroad. He got married and they travelled widely together. They came back to settle down in England. While he was working, he became heavily stressed. His wife recommended that he went to a yoga class as she had found it helpful. He started going to a yoga class and found it suited him. He had an accident and was injured in the 1990s, and yoga helped him to remain calm in this painful period. He retired later and became involved with the BWY organization. He still went to the same teacher, but he did not want to become a yoga teacher.

**Learner I** was born in the 1950s. She went to a University, took a PGCE and worked as a teacher for the education authority. In the 1990s, she suffered from back pain, and her GP recommended an operation. Instead, she went to a chiropractor, and upon his recommendation she joined a yoga class and decided that it was what she needed. She changed teachers a couple of times before settling down to her current one. She felt that yoga had helped to reduce the stress from work. When her husband had back pain, he went to a yoga class and found it helpful. At the moment, she was quite busy, and did not want to study to become a yoga teacher. She said she was happy that she had discovered yoga, which she could carry on as a part of her life.

**Learner J** was born abroad in the 1970s. She started practicing yoga at school, and found it interesting. She went to a university and got married. She had 3 children and had a busy life. Last year, she decided to start practicing yoga again and also started going to a class. She practiced one hour in a park everyday after taking her children to school. She was hoping to join the BWY teacher training course shortly, although she

was teaching one private voluntary class already. She found yoga empowering and energizing.

**Learner K** was born in the 1940s. He went to a university and had a professional job. He had been quite athletic and sporty all his life, and played competitive games until he ruptured his Achilles tendon. His marriage broke down, and he was depressed and took anti-depressants for a while. He met his current partner 6 months earlier, and with her recommendation he joined a yoga class. Although he found yoga helpful physically, he was not convinced about the spiritual side of its benefits.

**Learner L** was born in the 1940s. She got married young. She got divorced and afterwards started suffering from depression, and attended a day centre in a hospital mental health unit where she was introduced to yoga in the 2000s. After changing teachers a couple of times, she settled with her current teacher. She found a new partner, and shared many sporting activities with him including yoga, and felt happier. She practiced yoga one hour every morning before work.

**Student-teacher M** was born in the 1950s. After she qualified as a nurse, she took up psychiatric nursing, then left to travel abroad for 3 years. She then did district nurse training and specialized in Palliative Care nursing. After her mother's death, she moved abroad for a while. During the 1990s, she got married and divorced, and moved to her current house but went through a period of ill health. She practiced Buddhist chanting with a group of people. She also started going to a yoga class which helped her back problems. She decided to learn how to teach, so she joined a BWY teacher training course in the 2000s. She felt the study had completely taken over her life.

**Teacher N** was born in the 1940s. She went to an art college, got married and had a child in the 1960s. While she was pushing a pushchair, she saw a notice about a yoga class and decided to go. When she attended the first class in the 1970s, she felt very relaxed. At the 6<sup>th</sup> class, she felt that something had changed, and could not stop crying. She loved yoga, continued it, and attended a Pranayama course, and a Kripalu Yoga (see in glossary) course. She felt something special, so she went to the head ashram in



the USA for initiation in the 1980s. She also took a BWY teacher training course and qualified in the 1980s. Both of these were meaningful achievements for her. She started teaching while she was studying, and still continued to teach several classes a week. When she encountered life crises, she said that the yoga family was always on her side to support her. She kept going and learning from different yoga schools and teachers.

**Ex-Tutor O** She was born in the 1920s, and trained to be a nurse and midwife, and became a sister. She got married in the 1940s and had a family. In the 1960s, she started going to a yoga class. Later she qualified as a yoga diploma teacher with Chris Stevens (one of the founders of the BWY). In the late 1970s, she attended training as an Iyengar Yoga teacher. At the same time she started teaching BWY diploma teacher courses as there were no other teachers locally. In order to teach, she had to study and think through the syllabus and contents as she became involved with the BWY organization. She taught 10 diploma courses and DCT training courses as well as running workshops and Adult Education courses until she retired. She had a great pride in what she contributed and achieved with the development of yoga and the BWY.

#### **4.6. Evaluation of the use of ATLAS.ti for this study**

The ATLAS.ti software for qualitative data analysis was recommended by my supervisor. Following her advice, I attended the introductory course run by its specialists for two days in London. Then, following my purchase of the licence, I loaded the transcript files onto the programme. Although my volume of transcripts was approximately 200 pages, I only needed a small portion of its capacity. If a group of researchers were sharing the same data, or co-operating to work on a bigger project, the ATLAS.ti software may have been used to its full capacity. However, what I did with the programme was quite useful for me. The process of learning how to use it was not complicated. I used mainly the functions for coding, memos, comments, networking and grouping of codes, and mostly searching relevant quotations using their codes. I found that it was a useful tool for management of data on the whole.

There have been various opinions about the use of software for qualitative research. For instance, Diekelmann *et al.* (1994) commented that phenomenological researchers must

balance the benefits of managing large amounts of textual data, and the risk of losing the integrity of the hermeneutic/interpretive method. Flick (2002) comments on ATLAS.ti for qualitative research that the software is for building code-based theory and for conceptual networking. He says that computers and software, at the moment, should be seen as a pragmatic tool to support qualitative research. Kelle (2004) expresses his concern that analytical processes of textual interpretation may become unintentionally pushed aside by a preoccupation with coding categories. All three cautiously agree that software used for qualitative research can be a useful practical tool, and may improve to be a more enjoyable method in the future.

#### **4.7. Research trustworthiness and transparency**

The experimental/positivist approach for credibility of research is measured by validity and reliability. However, qualitative research in social sciences aims to find meaning in human reality, e.g. narratives, conversations, interactions, relationships, and other social practices. Therefore, qualitative research must instead be measured by different criteria. In their place, various expressions such as trustworthiness, credibility, authenticity, transferability for validity, transparency, dependability, truthfulness, and auditability for reliability are suggested (Flick 2002). I consider trustworthiness and transparency as being particularly important for my hermeneutic phenomenological research methodology in order to reduce personal bias. The principles of trustworthiness and transparency should be observed during data collection, analysis and abstracting the findings.

There are a number of ways to reduce the researcher's unintentional bias. One suggestion is to use multiple data collection methods. For instance, using interview(s), participant observations, and researcher's diaries together, helps the researcher to see the phenomena more clearly (Flick, 2002). In addition, researcher discussions during analysis and researcher's peer reviews for the conclusion are also recommended (Kvale, 1996; De Souza *et al.* 2002). Maggs-Rapport (2000a; 2000b; 2001) also suggests that combining multiple methods can increase research rigour.

In this study, plural research methods used for hermeneutic phenomenology were in-depth interviews of lived experience, field notes/research diary/interview diary, background data gathering through attending yoga events and talking to other members of the BWY practitioners, and relevant yoga literature and internet information.

*Field notes and research diary*” became useful to keep track of changing or developing ideas and thoughts.

*The interview diary* was invaluable for keeping a record of the impressions and small details concerning interview situations.

There were regular analytical discussions with my two supervisors to check if I was on the right course, and was observing the correct procedures.

I informed all the participants that they were welcome to read the transcript of their talk at the time of their interview. After I repeatedly communicated with the participants, only one participant later contacted me wanting to obtain a copy of her interview transcript, saying “This is my life story, and I feel good about it. Thank you for asking me to be interviewed”.

In addition, I communicated with all the participants twice informing them of my progress with a summary document, and asking them for any opinions.

In fact, I felt a slight concern about the possibility that participants might feel that they would want to change the sentence structure into more structured coherent writing. However, no other participants came back requesting transcripts, or with negative opinions. A few people I contacted for feed-back only gave me words of encouragement.

#### **4.8. Summary**

This research was based on the philosophical premise of phenomenology, and this chapter explored ethical issues, data collection, and employing analytical methods proposed by van Manen (1990), Benner (1994) and Cohen *et al.* (2000). This chapter was divided into two parts: general issues concerning research design and methods, followed by the actual step-by-step process of how I carried out data collection and hermeneutic phenomenological analysis according to the research design. The

snowballing and theoretical methods were used to recruit interview participants from members of the London region of the BWY. The participants belonged to various local yoga groups, and recruitment was through recommendations and volunteering. Interviews were conducted until saturation point was reached with the 15th participant. After the analysis, I outlined the research group and profiled the participants. There were 6 emergent themes and these themes will be explored closely with data in the next chapter.

## 5. Major Themes and Findings

### 5.1. Introduction

This chapter explores and considers the six overarching major themes which emerged through the process of data analysis in the previous chapters.

Through qualitative, in-depth interviews with yoga practitioners, this research explores the relationship between ‘the self’ of participants and lived experiences of yoga practice, so that the research question, the nature of ‘the self’ they cultivate, is uncovered.

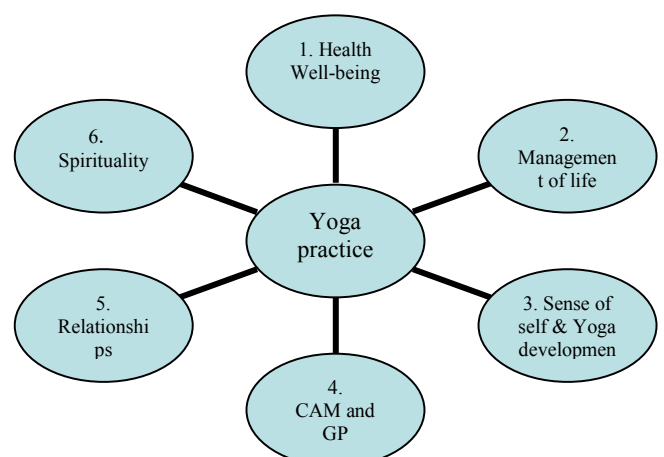
Six overarching themes of yoga practice are shown in the diagram below. These themes are inextricably intertwined, and multilayered in the practitioners’ individual life. There are also the important elements of the life history of those individuals and the broader spectrum of the history of yoga practice in the BWY which I must take into account.

What underlies the individual’s experience of yoga practice is profoundly multidimensional, ranging from the spiritual/religious to bodily exercise, from seeking meaningful life through yoga to finding a professional career in yoga teaching. One participant simply described her experience as life changing. For most yoga practitioners, yoga means a combination of some of those elements.

There are six overarching emergent themes from the previous chapter, which are:

**Figure 4: Six major themes**

1. Health and Well-being
2. Management of life crises
3. Sense of Self and yoga development
4. CAM and GP
5. Relationships
6. Spirituality



Under each theme, the deeper meaning and significance are explored and considered in this chapter in relation to the research questions.

The narratives of the participants share keen attitudes to yoga practice, although they showed various degrees of enthusiasm and diverse personal backgrounds. As Benner (1994, p. 104) said, “The goal of interpretive phenomenology is to uncover commonalities and differences”, these similarities and differences will be discussed in relation to each theme where appropriate.

Some of the themes are presented with a diagram showing smaller categories together with some of their typical words of expression. All the diagrams are shown here to illustrate a clear picture of themes elucidating the complex and multidimensional experiences of yoga practice.

In the diagrams, some of the keywords are shown to indicate the relevant quotations and the interviewee tags. As van Manen (1990, p. 115) explains that a common rhetorical device in phenomenological writing is the use of anecdote or story in narrative form.

The quotations are presented as verbatim and conversational wording, although any elements of personal identification have been removed in order to maintain participants’ anonymity and confidentiality. Thus the participants are addressed by yoga skill status with alphabetical tags in Italics. For instance, Participant no. 1 is referred to as Teacher *A* in this chapter.

The analysis of data uses examples of narratives, ‘*exemplars*’ from the interviewees’ transcripts to illustrate the theme in discussion. Cohen *et al.* (2000, p. 80) explain that “Exemplars are defined as bits of textual data in the language of the informant that capture essential meanings of themes... analysis of data includes elements or categories within themes.” Benner (1994, p. 117) says that the collection and aggregation of exemplars is central to the interpretive task. I also use the term ‘*categories*’ to indicate

what a theme includes within it as subdivisional elements suggested by Cohen et al (2000).

Hermeneutic phenomenology sometimes uses '*paradigm case*' by selecting a particular person's narratives to illustrate the deeper meaning of the theme in discussion.

Doolittle (1994, p. 213) agrees with the usefulness of using *paradigm cases* to clarify the phenomenon. Therefore, *paradigm cases* are used for illustrating the deeper meanings of individual narratives in this chapter.

## 5.2. Health and Well-being

The first theme, **health and well-being**, is associated with the first sub-research question about yoga practice's influence on health & well-being.

While I listened to participants' narratives, I noticed that their stories which went under the theme of 'health and well-being' could broadly be grouped into three categories:

1. Stories of their ill health and recovery through practice of yoga.
2. How yoga practice enhanced their quality of life.
3. Their views about the importance of the breath.

### 5.2.1 The stories of ill-health and recovery

The diagram below shows the reasons which motivated the participants to start yoga, and their reasons to continue to practice

**Figure 5: Ill-health and recovery**

	Illnesses and conditions which triggered starting/continuing yoga
Teacher A	<b>Stress</b> with husband's illness
Teacher B	<b>Stress</b> with children, <b>neck-pain</b> , <b>cancer</b>
Teacher C	<b>Stress</b> with children, grieving & menopause
Tutor D	<b>Stress</b> with children
Teacher E	<b>Stress</b> with children
Tutor F	<b>Stressful life</b> , loss of husband
Learner H	Work <b>Stress &amp; injury</b>
Learner I	<b>Back-pain</b> , work <b>Stress</b>
Learner K	Work <b>stress</b> , <b>back problem</b>
Learner L	<b>Divorce</b> , <b>depression</b>
Student-teacher M	Divorce, <b>depression</b> , <b>back-pain</b> ,
Teacher N	<b>Stress</b> with children

The quotations in this section contained multi-faceted aspects of 'health and well-being'. Throughout interviews with the participants, I became aware that the reasons they started going to yoga classes were dominated by experiences of various sufferings, and the major causes were physical pains and psychological anguish such as stress and



distress. I chose three cases of ill-health to illustrate their lived experiences. They involve **cancer, pain, and depression**.

For example, teacher *B* spoke about her experience with **cancer**. *B* described the experience when she discovered it.

*“In fact it was when I did yoga and meditation that I realized I had a problem... It’s like when I got down to that very still level did I realize there was something going on in my body.” Teacher B*

*B* described that her sharpened sense of her inner body through meditation detected the faint pain and the “something is wrong with my body” feeling. After she had the operation, she described her recovery from it.

*“...after the operation...the fact that I was a yoga teacher and I knew I’d got to work my muscles. And then things like, just getting the muscles back, I found the lying twist was quite a good one, so I did make a special effort when I was recovering, to lie on the floor and do some strengthening sit-ups, maybe. I think it just, I think yoga gives you a calmness, about things, like you cope better somehow. And you are going through these things but its ok, just feel that, it just gives you. In the end I just feel I’m living in a very calm place and things can be quite manic, but I’m still in my centre, I feel very centred and like it can’t throw me. So, it gives me strength, I feel I’ve got this inner strength now that takes me through.” Teacher B*

This paradigm case illuminates the strong link between ‘*the corporeality of the body*’ (Merleau-Ponty, 1962) and yoga practice when one is not functioning well. The sick body in particular points our way of existence in this world, both the outside body which we present to the world, and the body with the space inside, with the organ which is sick and painful. But the sick body for this practitioner became the body as a vehicle of practice.

Our illness and suffering have a temporal scale. How we are and when it happens, how it happens to us, and the way we live with them are unique for each individual.

Heidegger uses the similitude of ‘a hammer’ as a ready-to-hand item as a part of related tools (1962, p. 98). When the usefulness of the body as a tool breaks down, the personal world changes its meaning. Benner (1994, p. 121) describes that our body reflects the

world where embodied social practices, postures, and gestures allow one to skilfully perceive, communicate, trade, negotiate, make love, work and so forth. However, the person with certain skills can apply the know-how to project their future possibilities (Heidegger, 1962, p. 385). Teacher *B* realized that being a yoga teacher, she should exercise her muscles for her recovery. She said yoga helped her to become calm and centred, and gave her the inner strength. Identifying herself as a yoga expert, she realized she knew how to exercise, kept her sense of self intact by saying “I feel I’m very centred, and it can’t throw me”, and found the inner strength she needed to endure the difficult time.

A large part of participants started going to yoga classes because they suffered from some kind of **pain**. For instance, teacher *B* had a neck pain, learner *H* had a shoulder pain, and learners *I* & *K* and student-teacher *M* had back pains.

Learner *I* said that the reasons why she started going to a yoga class was **a back pain**. She also explained how she felt about it later.

*“...when I came to it about 10 years ago, ... I had **a back problem**, and when it was recommended to me by a chiropractor, I was a bit sceptical. I thought to myself “I don’t really think how it could work.” But they said to me that you can get some quite athletic forms of yoga. So I thought “Well I must give it a try.” Because, if I don’t, I was open to anything really. And I fortunately found out about some classes locally, not the current one I go to, but I found out about some other ones, and I went along and they were just what I needed.”* Learner *I*

Pain experience is often described as existentially and ontologically threatening (Csordas, 1994, p. 270; Good, 1990, p. 118). It can change the nature and quality of the life-world. Although the above exemplars illustrate its negative influence on the person, she took a step to act on the pain. It happened to be yoga, and the choice gave her a positive result. The above participant regarded yoga as an effective tool to control pain.

Suffering from negative events in life, such as loss, failure, grief, illness and conflict, happens to us all. As a result, people tend to get distressed and sometimes depressed. I quote below some exemplars from the narratives of two participants who told me their stories of psychological and mental suffering.

Learner *L* explained her experience with **depression**, and how she started yoga practice.

*“After my husband left, and I got very depressed, and I was quite ill... GP, although I was on antidepressant, she recommended that I went to N Hospital to the Day Unit there. That was where I was introduced to yoga. That was in 2001.”*  
Learner *L*

The above-mentioned participant was motivated to start going to yoga class because of her mental suffering. The nature of suffering appeared to be multi-layered. Learner *L*'s suffering started with her divorce, and yoga was her 'saviour' in her own word. Starting yoga marks the watershed for her from the past and to begin to look for a new life. According to Heidegger (1962), we normally live in the world of habitual, inauthentic everyday life of *das Man*. But when there is a breakdown of health, people lose their normal standing ground and feel anxious. The experience of ill-health strips away the feeling of taken-for-granted comfort in the world, and reveals the naked truth of our mortality. Heidegger suggests that this experience of anxiety is potentially an 'enlightening' event. Watts (2001, p. 43) says that anxiety can make a person re-evaluate their existence and see all other possibilities available to them. The suffering potentially enables the person to begin living authentically, with insight into own meaning in life.

For these participants, yoga aided the positive recovery process.

I used exemplars to illustrate the ways in which the practitioners found some help from yoga practice. The benefits they had initially were mainly biomedical, which seemed to lead to feeling good about themselves. They felt they had the power to control and manage the state of deficiency in health. In those exemplars, yoga was an effective tool to empower practitioners to retrieve their own sense of functioning body, and the self as a whole.

### 5.2.2 The Participant felt that yoga practice enhanced their life

This section is about the feelings of how yoga could enhance their sense of well-being. The wordings to express their feelings about how they experienced such an enhancement were wide ranging. I extracted some of the key expressions, and emphasized in Gothic letters in the exemplars below.

‘**Awareness**’ seemed a keyword for tutor *D* to express her bodily awareness.

*“Posturely, I think it helped. Because you are more **aware**, I am aware, and even sitting down, going in a car, nipping down, you think, “Oops, I’m slumped”, so you could correct yourself. So, I think, yes, it does help.” Tutor D*

Others described the enhancement in different words such as *balance, calmness, engaging, flexibility, being relaxed* and so on. For instance,

*“My physical states are very important to me, because it connects mentally with me, and I feel so much better, so I felt, because I am a nurse, I just felt looking after my body is very important. But I felt when I entered into yoga, opposed to my physical activities, it was **engaging the mind and soul**. So, spiritually, I felt greatly enhanced.” Student-teacher M*

*“[the benefit of yoga is] **Feel good factor**. Feel good factor... I felt better, stronger, more relaxed and I just felt better about myself, so that made me keep going back to the classes. ...After I practice yoga, I can’t describe it, I feel happier. I feel uplifted. More confident, I feel more eager about life, to do things, more energetic. I haven’t experienced anything except **feeling very good**, if I’m meditating. I suppose it’s what people feel. I haven’t felt anything extraordinary but feeling very good and relaxed and peaceful.” Teacher C*

The majority of the participants expressed their own experience of positive benefits through yoga practice. The benefits they emphasized were founded on the bodily practice, rather than on the cognitive thinking. For instance, they talked about ‘*awareness*’, i.e. awareness being focused on the bodily sensations, and ‘*inner feelings*’ that arise from the body movements and breathing. Heidegger calls it *mood*, a mode of a state-of-mind (1962, pp. 175-7), and by submitting to the world existentially and openly, we can encounter something that matters to us. Thus, our body can become ‘*open space*’ or ‘*clearing*’ in which Being can find its expression. Merleau-Ponty (1968) expresses this bodily feeling more emphatically, and sets Being on the ‘*Flesh*’. By attending the bodily sensations of practice and the flow of the bodily movement, the

sense of the self seems to go through the transformative process. The traditional western ‘self’ is based on the Cartesian cognitive self separated from the body (Campbell, 2007), but the bodily self they became aware of through yoga practice seemed to be new, revealing and fulfilling.

The discovery of ‘a new sense of self’ through bodily awareness is above all experiential and releasing.

The bodily sense of the self will be discussed further in the next chapter.

The participants often explained the importance of the breath for yoga practice. In the next section, I will attempt to shed light on the way their experiences were enhanced through the practice of breathing.

### **5.2.3 The importance of the breath**

The importance of the breath was emphasized by the majority of participants. Teacher A had a strong view about it:

*“I really do believe that the breath is all-important. I really do. If we get the breath right, and I do believe this very, very strongly if people would only realize the power of the breath an awful lot of ailments would perhaps not happen to people, especially psychosomatic ones.”* Teacher A

Teacher E explained how she felt about breathing when she went to new teachers:

*“...and I thought, “This is it!” Because the first few sessions were the time J was working then, he was very much into listening, looking **at breath**, and feeling breath, and nobody ever mentioned to me feeling yoga, how do you, how does it feel, where do you feel movement. It was never based on sensory experience. It was **be aware of, how do you feel?** Ok, breathe in, breathe out, where do you feel you are letting it into your body? Can anything happen? When do you feel anything happen, when you breathe out, when you interrupt your breath? And beside all that, there was this idea that I always knew... that you have to try and free breathing mechanism.”* Teacher E

E explained her experience of discovery of ‘the breath’ and its relationship with the body and the emotion. Her narrative of breath was very experiential and it might be

difficult for non-practitioners to understand. She found that the inner feelings which arise from yogic bodily movement in conjunction with breathing were liberating.

*“But with people who are very immobile, are really have to go right back to the breath. And **in all yoga practice really is the breath that is the basis of it all.** And the breath is the key to the emotions of the lungs. And it’s that the relationship between the breath and the body we can’t separate, which we have separated, but we shouldn’t. We need to work as a unity really.”* Teacher E

However she confessed that she was confused with the contradiction between what she had read in the classic text books and what she believed was in the modern understanding of breath.

*“...and I think that is the way they are contrary to how the body behaves, contrary to the way the breath is. So, there is a little confusion in my mind.”* Teacher E

Breathing practice was taught in a standardized way in the diploma teacher training course (the BWY’s syllabus for diploma teacher training and vignettes of main yoga scriptures are in appendices). E learned new yoga breathing ideas and methods through her new teachers, and she thought her yoga practice was transformed. Merleau-Ponty explained this bodily sensation ‘*the thickness of the pre-objective present*’, and it is where ‘*we find our bodily being, social being and the pre-existence of the world*’. It is also ‘*the basis of our freedom.*’

Morley (2001, p. 76) interprets it as ‘**proprioception**’, and says proprioception is an inverted perception. Proprioception seemed to play an important role for developing a sense of the embodied self.

The experience of the breath the participant described was different from each other, but the importance they placed on it was significant. Not only the breath was thought to be the basic technique of yoga, but it was also regarded as an important link to meditation practice. Teacher A believed that breathing practice was the centre of the therapeutic yoga for treating chronic and psychosomatic illnesses. Others felt that breathing practice had a direct connection with meditation and spiritual well-being.

For Merleau-Ponty, ‘inspiration; and ‘expiration’ are literally taken out of Being (1964a, p. 167). In yoga scriptures, breathing practice is called ‘*pranayama*’, and ‘prana’ is usually translated as ‘life force’, in English. Breathing and energy flow in the body have

been considered important by many Eastern practices (Varela *et al.* 1993; Graham, 1999), where the breath of the body and the mind become united. As *E* explained, the emotional reflection with breath could unite the body and the feelings, and this unity was deeply embedded in the body. But, there seemed to be some conflict between how it was taught in the yogic textbooks and the modern interpretation which was based on anatomy and physiology.

On the whole, the participants found that yoga practice was conducive to improving their health and enhancing their well being. They also found that the breath was an important point of reference for the unity of their body and mind. However, there were significant differences between them with regard to their level of understanding and their engagement in yoga practice. In the next theme, I explore how the participants applied varying degrees of yoga skills when faced with life crises.

### **5.3. Management of Life Crises: Using Maslow's 'Hierarchy of Human Needs' model.**

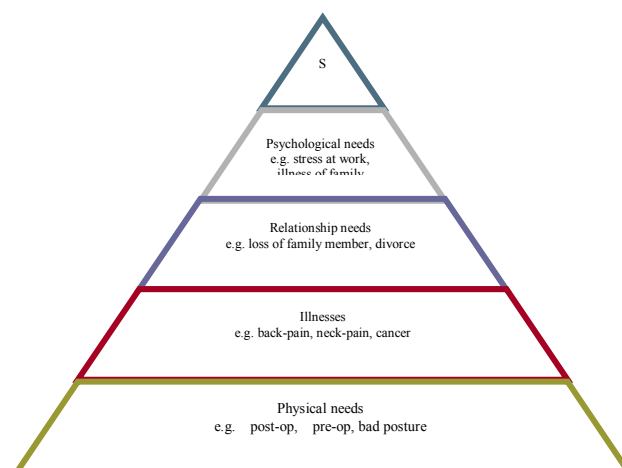
The New Age Movement was an important force for spreading modern yoga. Its positive attitude towards life was underlined by a psychological philosophy and framework, and the driving force of the Human Potential Movement (Puttick, 2004). Maslow's Hierarchy of Human Needs played an important part since the 1960s to promote this movement. Maslow's model is simply used here to provide signposts for self-developmental stages.

Maslow's Human Needs model is based on what we lack at each particular stage of life, and how we become aspired to achieve the goal of fulfilment. Similarly, life crises happen because we lose stability in the life we normally take for granted, such as health, family and relationships. The participants who said that yoga was an important part of their life were long term, often committed practitioners. In particular, some of the participants who said that practicing yoga helped them to face and endure their difficulties in life, and considered yoga to be essential to their life. Those participants associated the difficulties of life and the solving or mitigating effect of yoga practice by saying "*yoga gives me stability*", "*yoga is my anchor*" and so forth. The difficulties they faced were diverse in their nature and varied in degree. I sort out the nature of life's

difficulties into a hierarchical order by loosely following Maslow's 'Hierarchy of Human Needs' model with some modification. In his "*A Theory of Human Motivation*" (Maslow, 1943), he divided human motivation into five levels driven by individual needs: first are the basic or physiological needs; second are the safety needs which include the functioning bodily health; third are the love and belonging needs; fourth is the self-esteem needs, and the last is the needs for self-actualization. Maslow explains that they are hierarchically organized and are related to each other. When the lower needs get satisfied, the higher needs become desirable. The fifth level is variously called cognitive, intellectual or spiritual needs, which are categorized as 'Growth' needs rather than 'Deficiency' needs like the first four levels. Maslow (1998, p. 218, original work published in 1968) defines the fifth 'self-actualization' as (a) acceptance or an expression of the inner core self, and (b) minimal presence of ill-health.

I divided the basic difficulties the participants talked about into 5 levels of needs similar to those in Maslow's model as shown in the diagram below.

The first level is the physical needs, rather than physiological needs, where I include the bodily discomfort that hinders normal life from functioning. The second level is the impaired health: illnesses and pain experiences which may require medical intervention. The third level is the relationship needs such as the loss of family members or divorce. The fourth level is the psychological needs where difficulties include stress at work or long-term illness of family members. The fifth level is the spiritual needs where participants search for the meaning of life.



**Figure 6: Hierarchy of needs in times of life crises**



### 5.3.1 Physical needs

At a foundation level, there were physical discomforts that participants wanted to solve. The exemplars I used here were **bad posture** and **post-operation weaknesses**. Some aspects of experience of suffering overlapped with theme 1, but the emphasis here is the way in which negative experiences were managed.

I use a paradigm case of learner *K*. He presumed yoga was a form of physical exercise. So, when he had a back problem, he decided to take up his partner's advice and started yoga class. He did not have any expectation or opportunity beforehand to practice yoga's deep relaxation or meditation. According to him, the main reason he did not believe yoga to be other than physical exercise was that he had been in the scientific and engineering industry for a long time. In addition, he had been a strong active sport person from his youth until his divorce and resulting depression. *K* said when he started going to a yoga class,

*"I have done very much a desk job with writing software, and which means I spend 8 or 9 hours sitting at desk and not moving. And I acquired **a habit of sitting not very straight**. So, that is another thing that I hope to get out of yoga is a practice of sitting straight, straightening up, not slouching."* Learner *K*

5 months after joining a yoga class, he evaluated that he was making an improvement although he said that he was uncertain about whether it was due to yoga. He summarised the result of his yoga practice positively, and remained neutral towards the aspects of spirituality in yoga.

### 5.3.2 Illness

A number of participants mentioned that the reasons why they started yoga practice were due to their illnesses or painful conditions which were not always effectively treated by biomedicine. I have selected here an example of pain experience. Learner *I* had **a back-problem** when she started her first yoga class:

*"Because I had developed sciatica, and I had this awful pain and had been to the hospital. And they had done an MRI scan, and then they said to me, the consultant said, "Oh well," he said, "the next thing I suppose would be to do operation."*

*And I thought, “No, I know I am not that bad, I know.” ...it was after that I found out about yoga, I just started yoga. And within 6 weeks I could tell that the pain was diminishing and over ... if I suddenly do something and my back seizes, gets a bit troublesome again, I know what exercise to do, **I know what postures to do to rectify it.**”* Learner I

Learner I was a person who wanted to make informed independent decisions on her health matters, and she chose to start practicing yoga. She seemed to be the typical case of a participant who wanted to take their health in their own hands as much as possible, rather than simply accepting the opinions of medical experts. Learner I evaluated that yoga practice had been beneficial, and used it as the method of maintaining a pain-free back, as well as for relaxation. Similarly, three other participants explained how the knowledge of yoga techniques helped them to manage the pain caused by their condition.

Thus the feeling of **empowerment**, i.e. of being able to deal with certain conditions using yoga techniques, was frequent in the interview data. It was one of the main reasons they continued yoga practice when they were suffering from conditions such as back pain and depression.

However, Figure 5 indicated that the largest part of the suffering was psychological ‘stress’ and ‘depression’, caused by difficult relationships with others.

### **5.3.3 Relational needs**

The difficulties and stress caused by relationships are frequent features of everyday life. When relationships are in crisis, their negative effects take a toll on people’s lives. When life became difficult with loved ones, some participants turned to yoga practice for support. I take the lived experience of teacher C as a paradigm case to illustrate this.

Teacher C encountered her first life crisis when her father died. She described her devastating experience of the loss and grieving, and the subsequent recovery. C talked about two occasions she suffered depression.

*“...my first life crisis was when my father died ... I was very close to him since child.”*

*“I think it was a mixture of my time in life when the children grow up and become independent, ...you still have to go through that.” Teacher C*

After her father died and her children left home, she had to rebuild her life. She described the occasions on which she shed tears during yoga class, and released her suppressed emotions.

*“I have cried during yoga sessions. My emotions have been released, three occasions I’ve cried during a meditation. I have cried practicing one of the asanas, and the other times something more. So yes, that three times I had to cry quite strongly, all my emotions. Through yoga, yoga released my emotions.” Teacher C*

She explained how she overcame the second crisis with yoga study.

*“...my second crisis I think may that was the time I decided that I wanted to do teaching, to go to teacher training. And I imagine, I think it was because I needed it. Because I needed something at that time of life for me to survive, and I chose yoga, and it definitely helped me because I was learning, I was enjoying the course. But it was hard sometimes.” Teacher C*

With the first crisis, C released her bottled up emotions of grief during yoga classes, enabling her to go through a cathartic process towards recovery. However, the second crisis was different in nature, as was the recovery process, which required building a new life without children. She filled the gap with hard study on a yoga teacher training course. She decided to set a goal to be a yoga teacher. Studying yoga worked well and gave her the opportunity to sublimate her emotions into a more constructive and tangible activity. However, since yoga was used to overcome her life crises in a more practical way, she did not continue her regular practice while she was busy with family business. It seemed that when the crises were over, she did not feel the need to continue. Teacher C said,

*“I feel that when I teach I have to absorb knowledge myself so I’m learning a lot, I’m learning because to pass on knowledge...which now, because I’m not teaching I’m more relaxed about it, and I don’t do so much studying of Yoga.” Teacher C*

Teacher *C* used yoga for two different reasons. Firstly, yoga eased the pain caused by loss and grieving, and helped her to release her built-up emotions. Secondly, studying for a teacher training course gave her a sense of purpose and achievement. Learning about yoga also gave her a sense of meaningfulness. However, when the crises were over, her family business became the top priority again, and her commitment to yoga was sidelined.

#### **5.3.4 Psychological needs**

Psychological needs, which included stress at work, stress caused by a family member's chronic illness and stress due to confinement at home with children, were mentioned by the participants as the reason why they started to practice yoga. I selected teacher *A* as an example of this: *A* described her thoughts when her husband was diagnosed as chronically ill:

*"There's going to be a lot of stress involved, and **ongoing stress**, this is not going to get better, ...I thought "No, I think I'll go back to yoga." And I did, and I have been both practicing and teaching yoga ever since... enabling me to stay healthy and strong but yoga, I think really has been what has done that because to me, that is what yoga is all about. **Balance**, keeping balanced, and I don't know what I would have done without yoga in my life."* Teacher *A*

She attributed her ability to cope with life to yoga practice with deep appreciation, and mentioned that the benefits from yoga were psychological as well as physical. Teaching yoga also became her vocation and a source of income to support her family. Thus, she was almost immersed in yoga everyday, and dedicated her life to teaching for a long time. As far as *A* was concerned, yoga not only provided her with a deep psychological support in her continuing struggle with life while her husband and children needed her strength, but it was also a source of income, and it brought her friends and a community.

Although each yoga experience might be unique in nature, in general, the majority of participants used yoga practice for stress relief in a more straightforward way, as shown in figure 5.

### 5.3.5 *Spiritual needs*

What constitutes spiritual needs is intangible and hard to define. According to Maslow (1943; 2000), spiritual needs arise when the basic needs are satisfied, and he called it the need for ‘*self-actualization*.’ Maslow (ibid.) explains that the term ‘spiritual needs’ refers to the desire for self-fulfilment and this tendency might be phrased as the desire to become everything that one is capable of becoming.

For the participants, ‘spirituality’ appeared to be an ambiguous term, and was uniquely understood by each individual. However, it was recognized by most as something worth reaching out for. For example, teacher *A* explained that yoga spirituality became a philosophy of life she could live by,

*“...he (tutor) really epitomized everything I felt about yoga, i.e. what he said was “You’re not doing this diploma just to start teaching, that’s not, that’s not the end result. You’re doing this for life, this is **the philosophy for life** to hold on to.”*  
Teacher *A*

*“...when your life is, to a certain extent, given over to caring for somebody, it is a very special life, very special. I believe, I actually believe especially with my Yoga experience, and the background of yoga, that I have chosen this life, so therefore to me it is **Bhakti Yoga, it’s yoga devotion**, and devoting my life to my husband, caring for him, I think that was the god-given gift, really and truly... I mean he accepts it and also imbues it with a kind of specialness that, **this was his karma**.”*  
Teacher *A*

Teacher *A* asserted that the teachings of yoga were the philosophy of life to hold on to. As far as she was concerned, it was not something one learned in a classroom and forgot about after the examination. It had a far more important spiritual value on which her very existence could depend. She likened her way of life to living Bhakti yoga. Bhakti Yoga is a term taught in Bhagavad-Gita as a spiritual practice of devotion to a god. *A* accepted her husband’s illness as karma, she accepted her life as the god-given-gift as a part of ‘thrownness’ (Heidegger, 1962) of life, and wished to practice yogic devotion for him, but not to a specific god. Spirituality was not religious for *A*, but secular, and she meant to practice it for the benefit of another human being, i.e. her husband.

Teacher *N* described a difficult period with her husband when she came back from initiation at an ashram in the USA. The spirituality she talked about was not only the ashram experience but also what she went through when she came home. She explained,

*“He (her husband) couldn’t cope with me at all. He thought I had changed completely, all I wanted to do was to be left alone, and chill out... and gradually come back to family life. ...I didn’t do very well at all. And so, we started fighting. He thought I completely changed. What I realized later was, he was really scared, that I had left and stayed in America and yoga, and I didn’t come back. But, most funny thing was, for me that it connected me with family all the more. Actually it reconnected me with my family with on a much deeper level... I want my life to be a balanced family life, with yoga underpin it. And not to be in some sort of reified atmosphere, so it came as a big shock... Because I gained so much inner strength from the initiation.”* Teacher *N*

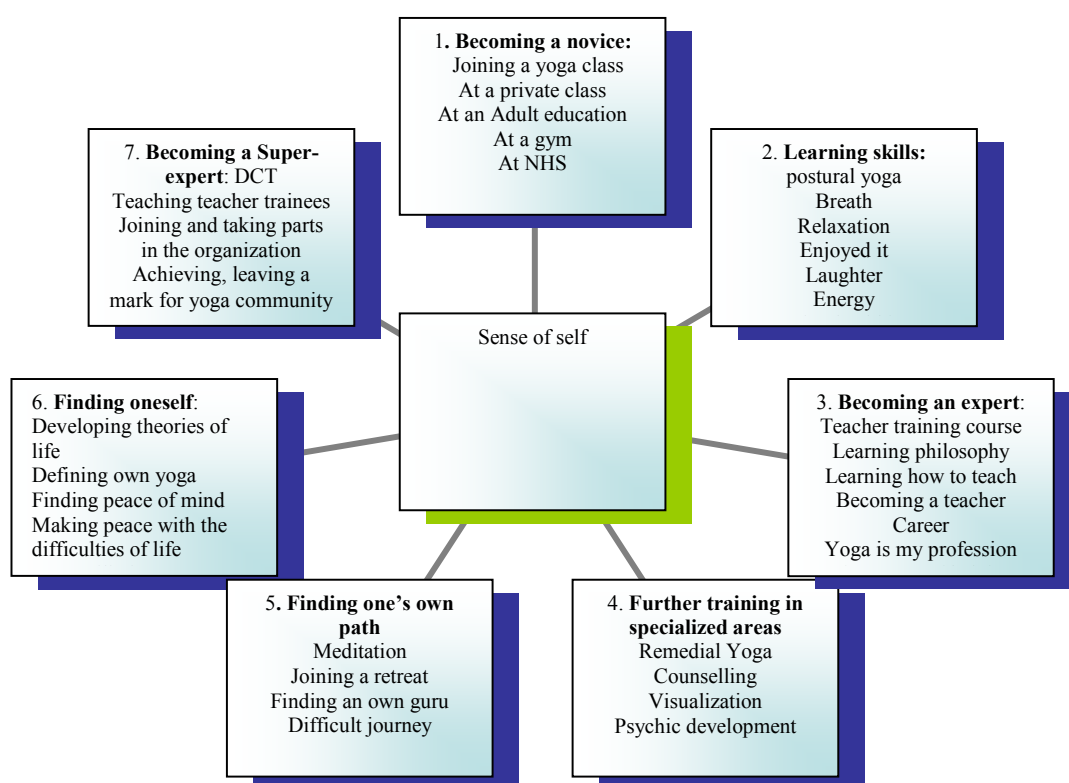
*N* was explaining how she went through a spiritual transformation with initiation. She said that her ‘inner integrity’ was her newly gained strength. With it, she could hold her head high and face the world, starting with her husband. Van Gennep (1960) postulates that people go through ‘rites of passage’ in order to grow into a new role through overcoming adversity. He divides rites of passage into preliminal, liminal and postliminal. *N*’s experiences of liminal and postliminal struggles were necessary for her growth and re-adjustment with her husband. *N*, in the end, became an independent person who could stand on her ground. However, *N* was the only participant who made this dramatic transformation in a relatively short-time through an initiation. Self-actualization takes many guises, but it is characterised by its ability to transform a participant through a trigger event. In the case of *A*, learning the yoga philosophy and assimilating her life to it was the life changing event she needed. The initiation helped *N* to create a new self with an inner strength. However, the transformation of the self required a painful period of readjustment.

In the next theme, I explore how the sense of self went through transformation as yoga skill deepened.

#### **5.4 Sense of Self and yoga development: using Dreyfus’s skill acquisition model.**

There are many theories about how we develop our sense of self, and some psychologists postulate that we follow certain developmental stages, e.g. Erik

Erickson's eight stages of human development, C. G. Jung's individuation, Piaget's stages of cognitive development, and so on. My interest here is the embodied self-development of yoga practitioners, and I adopted the framework of Dreyfus which is based on the central concepts in Merleau-Ponty's 'intentional arc' and 'getting a maximal grip' in '*Phenomenology of Perception*' (Dreyfus, 1987). Dreyfus divides the Skill Acquisition or '*The Establishment of the Intentional Arc*' into five stages: Stage 1 - Novice, Stage 2 - Advanced Beginner, Stage 3 - Competence, Stage 4 - Proficient, Stage 5 - Expertise. However, for this thesis, I found that 5 Stages need to be expanded to 7 stages to accommodate my theory, i.e. there are **two further inner developmental stages of 5 & 6**, where they develop their sense of self rather than their skill per se. Thus, I identified 7 stages as significant in the participants' sense of self development through the yoga skill acquisition. These stages only indicate the point reached from the points of view of skill, and their sense-of-self in comparison with others. These are as follows:



**Figure 7: Sense of self and yoga development**

**The first stage – novice** – started when people came to a yoga class as novices, they had some reasons to do so. They were quite often motivated by physical and psychological discomforts or sufferings.

**The second stage – advanced beginner** – began after they started practicing a modern form of postural yoga and they started to change their perceptions of yoga practice.

**The third stage – competent** – began when they decided to join a diploma teacher training course, and started learning and thinking further about yoga. It appeared that at this stage the students seemed to go through a transformative period and came out with a more affirmative attitude to yoga and their identity as a yoga practitioner.

**The fourth stage – exploration** – began when the teachers (EX) and experienced yoga students wanted to train further in yoga study and tried to find their own path according to their needs.

**The fifth – proficient** – began when they started to find their own path. They wanted to go through an internalized period of deepening their practice.

**The sixth – discovery** - began when they finally found peace with themselves, or they reconciled with their difficulties in life and felt comfortable with the world by defining their own yoga and developing their own theories of life.

**During the seventh stage** – expertise- some of the teachers (EX) went on to study to become a Diploma Course Tutor (DCT), and tried to contribute to the wider circle of yoga communities with what they had acquired from their long experience.

The seventh stage is when some of the teachers undergo training and start teaching yoga teacher training courses, and take up broader roles in the yoga community as a Super-expert.

Among the 15 participants, there were 3 diploma course tutors (DCTs), 6 yoga teachers, and 6 yoga learners. I divided these groups into a super-expert group (SE), an expert group (EX), and a novice group (NV).

I divided them mainly because there is a considerable yogic knowledge gap between them, and the difference of knowledge was not only the amount of information acquired over the practicing years, but also a qualitative, attitudinal difference towards yoga and themselves.



Therefore, my view is that there were developmental learning processes that yoga learners acquired when they became involved in practicing yoga.

#### **5.4.1 Becoming a novice: joining a yoga class**

What motivated the participants to join a yoga class was varied, but most of them wanted something from yoga to fill what they felt was deficient in their life. Some needed stress relief, others needed physical exercise, relaxation, or pain relief. For instance, learner *H* had a stressful situation at work:

*“There’s pressure in the job and I was finding tension in my neck and the rest of it...And one year my wife said... “Oh you should go to yoga.” And I said “No I’m not going to go to yoga, it’s really for women” that kind of stuff.” But later on I decided “Well, maybe I’ll try and see what it’s like” and it was 15 years ago, and I’ve not stopped since.”* Learner *H*

There were a number of participants who started going to yoga class after having had babies. For example, tutor *F* described her experience:

*“...it was after the birth of my second son that I really needed to escape and, he won’t forgive me for saying this but I needed to get out of the house from him, and, from the boys because I found it so exhausting... But prior to that when I was pregnant with him with the birth of my first son, they had sort of exercises for pregnancy.”* Teacher *F*

Altogether, ten participants listed ‘stress’ as the reason for starting yoga. In fact, yoga students in Beginner’s classes often stop attending after a while, although many continue to practice to some extent at home, and return to a teacher later when they feel the need to practice more regularly, as participants *A*, *F*, *J* and *M* had done so.

#### **5.4.2 Learning skills: practising postural yoga**

Most of the yoga classes run by the BWY trained teachers were taught to teach a modern form of postural yoga in accordance with the teacher training syllabus (a copy is in appendices). However, there are exceptions to this norm: specially organized classes for certain purposes like meditation, pranayama, and therapy. A typical class

basically goes through a sequence of practices including breathing, front and back bending, side stretching, twisting, balancing, inversion, and relaxation. The duration is usually 1 – 2 hours. The yoga students often move or change their teachers as they begin to learn more about yoga, as learner participants *I*, *L* and *M*, explained.

It seemed that yoga practitioners often, but not always, wanted to move on to the next stage after a while.

Teacher *B* described her experience when she started going to a class:

*“I like to have different things. I don’t like the same thing all the time. So I alternated, but I always kept the yoga going, and I never found yoga difficult because I think I’m naturally very supple and I was terrible at school at doing sports, jumping. ... And so I found actually yoga was something I could do, it wasn’t competitive, and I’m not very competitive so I never had to compete with anybody in yoga class, and I found I could do it and I enjoyed it and I found I got more strong, more supple.”* Teacher *B*

One participant said about her first experience, and how she returned to a class later,

*“I’m very happy that I actually paid for the semester. So I thought “All this money, I have to come.” And after the 6<sup>th</sup> lesson, it started growing, it grew on me and I really liked it, and I kept going to that class. Then, when the boys were small, I did that for about 6 years... Well, I felt fitter, stronger, more relaxed and I just felt better about myself, so that made me keep going back to the classes.”* Teacher *C*

Learner *K* had a more detached view towards yoga. He said that after practicing yoga for 6 months, he felt that,

*“I think, because I am still seeing, I think, because I am still seeing physical benefits. And while that continues, I am sure I will continue. Some of the emotional and spiritual aspects may rub off on the way.”*  
*“...it’s one of the reasons, like her (the teacher) style, stretching, moving part is good. It’s good. It’s all helpful, practically. Mostly practical, the reality of just breathing through one nostril, and just filling up one lung, breathing must be only one. It’s a nice idea, and it gets me thinking about breathing, which is finally working it out.”* Learner *K*

Another participant talked about her discoveries in yoga:

*“It is the awareness I suppose. That’s something I’ve never really thought about it before doing yoga... I find it very, very different experience from any other activities with great deal. And it also engaged with my mind with any other sporting activity certainly doesn’t do it. I also felt it was a stabilizer for my life. I felt very grounded, and I liked the individuality of it where it wasn’t competitive, and I love talking to people who used go to classes, because I felt connected to them.” Student-teacher M*

The participants above became keen learners or ‘advanced beginners’. These participants seemed to have found something unexpected in yoga practice, such as awareness, breathing, relaxation. However, what is interesting at this stage were the path they followed and the way they made their subsequent trajectories of progression. Some participants were so deeply touched by their findings that they decided to become yoga teachers themselves. Others were happy to carry on as they were.

One participant explained that she wanted to undertake a teacher training course to learn more about yoga:

*“...the teachers never explain much more than that. I believe in teaching, we keep it a bit secretive, a bit like religions, you keep it, and I thought **I wanted to know more, more deeply about this**. And I thought “Well the best way to do, the only way I could think of is to apply for a teacher training course, then I could get more knowledge in that way, not just going to a class and being passive, I wanted to be more active in yoga.” And that’s how I did.” Teacher C*

Teacher C implied that, she was not able to learn as much as she wanted in an ordinary yoga class, and that she needed to apply for a teacher training course, which provided a more substantial and organized manner of studying.

Next, I explore what happened to those participants who took up a teacher training course.

#### **5.4.3 Becoming an expert: Teacher training course and teaching**

It appeared that the participating teachers who undertook the BWY’s diploma teacher’s training course went through a period of transformation. It seemed that they had gone

through a ‘rite of passage’ period to become an expert, they tended to attach a deep personal meaning to this period of learning.

Teacher *E* told her story of becoming a teacher, and how the teaching started:

*“But I knew that **I wanted to know more**. So, I really joined the teaching group not with the idea necessary for teaching, but just knowing more. And we obviously started anatomy and physiology and, it just went on from there... I think **my idea of yoga has changed over the years**.”* Teacher *E*

*“I started teaching in 1990. And the first class I took was the one J gave me... her class there while I was training. And I had another class teaching people who were very immobile at a day centre which was an adult education class. So, I had those two classes, as I was finishing my last year of training. **And students started to teach me**.”* Teacher *E*

Tutor *F* had a remarkable trajectory of yoga career as her profession. Over the years, she progressed swiftly from a novice to an expert, and became a super-expert.

*“that’s when I started really taking yoga seriously because I thought if I’m going to teach it, it’s not going to be just for leisure. ... And I have got very kind regards for the people that were on that course with me, and, as always with teacher training we are encouraged to teach our peers first and basically I had to teach, ... and my husband just turned around and he said to me, ‘You’ve done it once, and it can’t be any worse’, once I told him J’s words and he said ‘You can only learn from the experience.’ And I think that was also a word that hit me because it was the word ‘**learn**’. Afterwards I began to feel a bit more confident, the group was supportive, and then J, I think about 15 months into my training, got me my first job as a yoga teacher at Adult Education...I got my teaching diploma in 1990, and from there on, I haven’t looked back and I absolutely love teaching.”* Tutor *F*

During this period, the participants who took up the training found something personally important and meaningful in learning the skill to teach yoga.

Student-teacher *M* was studying when I interviewed her. She described how she felt about the course. She said she did not find the philosophy easy, and learning how to teach was hard work. But she found that the course was a life changing experience and the beginning of her new life:

*“ I tell you it’s been **a life changing experience**. If I had known, how intense it was going to be, I would have said ‘No’. **It has taken over my life**... it takes such a precedent over my life, I eat, sleep, yoga at the moment. My life revolves around it...I have to say the yoga course has been tremendously changing my life. It’s been very tough.”* Student-teacher M

*“But I can’t tell you I just love teaching yoga, I mean it’s very hard work as you’ve got to prepare a lesson plan, you’ve got to have a class up and running... you evaluate yourself all the time. But it’s the best thing I could have done... I will seek to learn more, because **I feel this is the only very beginning of yoga for me, this diploma course is. Yes, this is the basis for me.**”* Student teacher M

The participants who went through the teacher training course evaluated the experience as life changing and positive. They all thought the learning process was interesting and meaningful although it was hard work. On becoming a qualified teacher, some of them made being a yoga teacher their profession, and others regarded it as rewarding and enjoyable. On the whole, as M said that the diploma course was only the beginning, most of the teachers went on to further learning as well. The life changing experience the participants talked about seemed to epitomise the turning point where physical activity became metaphysical engagement. The participants started at this point to become aware of the meaning attached to the physical postural work, as they went through the diploma course studies. They called this knowledge system ‘yoga philosophy’.

In philosophy as well as social sciences, the self is a very much contested issue. However, in a very broad sense, the life changing experience means that the participants were finding out the ‘new’ self through yoga’s postural practice with philosophical meaning they never thought possible before.

Freshwater and Robertson (2002) termed this transition as ‘*The Return*’. After going through a set of new learning skills and new understanding, participants come back in a cyclic process of integrating the bodily activities and attached meaning system. When they became qualified teachers, these participants wanted to acquire more indepth knowledge and started another cycle of learning.

#### 5.4.4 Further yoga training in specialized areas

Having been to, or having taught yoga classes for a while, and often upon completing the teacher training course, the majority of yoga practitioners seemed to want to deepen their yoga knowledge in a personal way. Some took up a remedial course, or focused on specialised areas of yoga training. For example, one teacher went on to study remedial yoga after finishing her teacher training course.

*“I then of course was very interested in **remedial yoga**... and that gave me a remedial diploma from Ickwellbury.” Teacher A*

After the remedial course, she did autogenic training. By doing it she realized that her true path was with yoga.

*“I realized when I did this (autogenic) course that yoga was very much my path, and I realized that interesting though it was, I thought I shouldn't have deviated from what is my true path.” Teacher A*

One teacher went on to learn psychic development, counselling and mediation. She describes her experiences:

*“Well **the psychic development** is working with the chakras, so it's a big link with yoga. You work with the chakras, the 7 main chakras, and bring energy from the base, magnetic energy up, and spiritual energy down, and you're working with... And, the main ones for the psychic work are chakra 5 and 6, the throat, and the throat is hearing, so if you want to hear, you work to expand and you imagine this expansion all around the throat, so behind you as well so its like this big circle of energy and I got that I could feel that like, it was like somebody put a hand on my ear, it was like that sort of feeling, and it would go at any time... Yes. And I loved it, I absolutely loved it.” Teacher B*

Although *B* passionately loved psychic training, she moved on to learn counselling a few years later. When yoga teachers got their qualification, it seemed that it was time for them to reflect and search within themselves what they were looking for in yoga and in life. From the above exemplars, what they were going through in their personal odyssey appeared so diverse, ranging from treating medical conditions to paranormal and transpersonal skills. The vast range of what one can expand in learning an aspect of yoga is almost endless, as one can see in the public domain publications. In the next section, I will trace their chosen path a little further.

#### 5.4.5 Finding one's own path

After searching and deepening their own yoga practice, some participants seemed to find something more personally meaningful than what they had previously known, and they committed themselves further. They explained their lives in terms of yoga, and their chosen life path.

One tutor talked about her meditation practice with deep feelings. She went to different gurus and teachers to explore what she was searching for in meditation. She described two slightly different methods of Buddhist meditation which had left her lasting impressions.

***“I used to do Sōtō-Zen meditation, ...and Goto came over from Canada, and one sitting, I was there, and she came, and she did this in my back (a stroking gesture), I hadn't experienced anything like that in my life. It was, really was, it was really like this red hot extreme thing moving in the back, and I'd never experienced that, anything like before.”*** Tutor D

*“And when I did **Vipassana meditation course**, 10 day silent meditation, again, it was very, very profound, that really does, really take you into who you really are... When I did my 10 days, and you sit quietly, you are not talking to anybody. You are just experiencing within. And at the end of the 10 days, when you start talking again, sounds are different, and they're ear shattering, even at this tone, it like being at an airport. And the things you see, through eyes, they look so different, so different from when you started talking. And when I was driving back from Marshes Down, it was just, it was just the sound of traffic, it was just, just too much, everything else in traffic. When you come home to get back to reality, it was like being jet lagged and you have to work that down. Because everything was so still, there was no movement. And as you notice it in the mornings when I miss my sittings, you notice how your day pans out, and things don't go smoothly, and you get agitated more quickly. And it does make a big, big difference. And also, because that retreat with Swami Vishnu is still fresh in my mind like yesterday, so I can just sit down, and I can just, I can just really pick up the essences of those feelings...**Big impacts**, and I will really strongly, strongly recommend that to anyone. But, Vishnu, Mr G. is an ordinary man and in an ordinary house holder, he does not change his name, he does not wear any robes or anything. And he just teaches you to be in each moment, and it is about equanimity, staying sane, whatever going on. And the first 3 days, you focus just on the breath coming in and out from the triangle of your nose. And that is hard. And then, you move into deeper, you start looking into sensation in your body, the*

*gross sensations and subtle sensations. And after that you just get to be.” Tutor D*

D’s selected way to deepen her yoga practice was learning from Buddhist meditation teachers rather than following a guru who could guide yoga meditation. What she found during meditation was so profound that she felt the world was different afterwards. With regular meditation, she said that she could manage calmness in everyday life. After meditation, the application of the resulting ‘new self’ to a busy secular life, rather than to religious settings, seemed to be the ultimate purpose for the participant at this stage.

Another teacher explained how her commitment with Kripalu Yoga led her to take the initiation ceremony with the guru in the United States. It was a culmination of her years of study in yoga. She emphasised the importance of uniting the body and emotions in free motion of flow.

*“That was **a big changing point for me** actually, because I had completed the BWY training, before I went to America... So going to Kripalu afterwards was like the icing on the cake, because, that was yoga... It’s because it has got free elements in it. Particularly, I like the approach that everyone in Kripalu has, it’s spiritual at the forefront, they do classical postures in common with other classical postures of other disciplines, but then you get to hold of postures for certain amount of time, and then go into your **own free flow of movement** as a counter pose to the posture, rather than as one has been taught beforehand, doing forward bend and then backward bend, or a standing posture and a seated posture. It’s not like that. It’s, you get to do a series of postures and then hold one to your limit really. So, holding it quite a length of time until your body says that you need to come out. May be holding it for another couple of breaths, so you are really feeling what that posture is giving to you. Then you release from it with your eyes closed. And stay in your prana body, and just move, and stretch, and release, and stretch and release, and you could go into a series of postures, or you could go into a series of simple stretches, depending on how you feel. Each time you do it, it’s different, because you respond to how your body is feeling in that particularly moment.” Teacher N*

N explained how Kripalu yoga taught her to move meditatively. Meditation in Kripalu seemed to be different from D’s Buddhist one. The way free-flow of movement described by N appeared to be a trance-like state, and which was leading to further release.



The long-term yoga practitioners seemed to settle down with some kind of meditative practices of their choice after years of searching for their own yogic path. The examples above were Soto Zen, Vipassana (insight) meditation, and flowing meditative postural works. They have something in common which can be described with expressions like ‘feel the moment’ and ‘be here and now’.

What does meditation mean to the participants? In modern yoga, searching for the essence of the self is often focused on the self ‘*within*’ through some kind of meditative practice as I argued in chapter two. I will explore next what they really found in their practice.

#### ***5.4.6 Finding oneself: developing theories of life***

Some participants commented, either explicitly or implicitly, that they had found a peace of mind, and had arrived at a stage of life where they could reconcile themselves to life’s difficulties. They also explained that their own theory of life developed through their life journey and long-term practice of yoga. They sometimes defined their own yoga in relation to their life, i.e. what they thought it was and what it meant to them.

One teacher explained with enthusiasm that in many ways yoga had become a vital part of her life in her adversity. She found in yoga the benefits of physical, emotional, financial, and relational grounding.

*I loved the people in the theatre and I did regret for a little while that I had given that up just by walking away. But now, why I walked away, **because it was to the life that I found and have now.** That’s the life I was meant to have, absolutely. I mean, I am so happy in my life, so happy I love yoga. Yoga is my life, it’s not just my job. ...I actually live yoga. I hope its not sounding terribly hip but it’s very true. With my kind of life, I have to live yoga, because if I don’t, I am not going to be able to keep going. It’s as simple as that. I live yoga, it makes me very healthy, it keeps my balance, and I’m not saying there are times when I can’t go on, but I accept these times, for humour.” Teacher A*

Another teacher talked about the freedom and happiness she gained with her life and 30 years of yoga practice.

*“I’m very happy because I work it out and I get the class to tell what they like, what they want to do, I think the counselling freed me with my yoga because*

*before the counselling I felt I had to know everything, and when I did the counselling I realized I didn't have to know and that was very freeing for me... I didn't have to be the expert anymore, I'm not the expert, I know a bit but, **that really was quite freeing.***" Teacher B

*"I'm very relaxed I think, I think I'm very laid back about it really. If they want to giggle, that's ok, if they want to have a little chat, if we do partner work and they all start chatting I'm quite happy with that.... **I don't think yoga is the be and end all.** I think we must do what we like, and if you like yoga then, then you'll enjoy it... and if you'd rather go and play tennis that's fine too."* Teacher B

One tutor explained that she arrived with yoga at the stage of life where she could accept the world as it was, and found peace with herself.

*"...that is how it is. And certainly it helps me to, I don't worry. I don't worry about things, I am able to see things as they are. And take things as they come, and deal with them. I am not the person to cross the bridges before I get to them. And I think that is down to yoga. I think that really helped in that way."* Tutor D

One teacher said that she had become more reflective:

*"I have, what I am saying is that **I have more reflective time** during my day now than I used to have. How does it help? I think probably, if I get irritated or annoyed, I am more able to stand back from the situation, perhaps. And just breathe or, well I finally don't need to do that any more, I don't know. I know that, probably I breathe differently."* Teacher E

The long-term practitioners seemed to have found ways of expressing their own meaning of life in relation to yoga practice. The meaningfulness of life appeared to be uniquely different for each participant, but what they had in common was they shared the fact that their theories of life, constructed through yoga practice, helped them to perceive themselves as a more fulfilled persons. When the participants found their life became more meaningful, their sense of self became positively transformed too. The theme in this section has relevance with the sub-research question 3, "*Does yoga practice influence yoga practitioners' sense of self?*" And the answer seemed very much affirmative as far as the participants were concerned. However, the nature of relation between the development of the sense of self and yoga practice is not a simple correlation. It will be discussed further in the next chapter, since 'the self' needs to be discussed separately and in depth.

#### **5.4.7 Becoming a super-expert (DCT): teaching next generation of teachers**

There were three participants who became Diploma Course Tutors after teaching yoga for a while. Two of them were still very active in teaching and one was retired. They shared a common sense of purpose in that they seemed to want to contribute something to the yoga community and society at large.

Tutor *D* explained that her achievement with the BWY organization made her feel happy:

*“I’ve written a module for the 3<sup>rd</sup> age yoga, which is basically teaching yoga to the senior adults. As I say it may not be an old in age, but fitness and everything depending on their level, and this module is directed mainly to those people who are in hospitals and nursing homes really, to encourage them to move. And to really just to view the ageing processes as another process, as an adventure rather than thinking of, as an ailment or as a disability, and to get away from the wheel chair mentality, sort of thing, if you like. So, that what I wrote and I finished the module, and it has been accepted, and I am going to run the first course in November.”* Tutor *D*

*D* also passionately talked about the future of the BWY.

*“I think our courses are very good, **the BWY training course, it is one of the best that’re around.** And at the moment, we could not become an awarding body (of NVQs) on our own, because we don’t issue enough diplomas, although we are the biggest one. ...I think we should have some sort of regulating body, that is the nearest thing we can get to. So, I am quite happy that we’ve got that far. **I’m quite happy that BWY has raised the standard,** so that those standards have to be maintained.”* Tutor *D*

*D* expressed her great pride and joy that she contributed to the BWY by creating a therapeutic yoga module for teachers which they could use to help more ageing people in society. She also took pride in achieving that the BWY, as an organization, won the position of the leading British governing body for yoga practitioners. The BWY was now attempting to become the regulatory body that could issue a higher vocational award for yoga teaching than the current diploma (Issacson, 2008).

Ex-tutor *O* was one of the founding members of the local yoga community, and she was proud of what she had achieved and contributed to the organization. However, she talked about an issue the BWY faced in modern society. She commented that the BWY should become a commercial organization run by an employed professional manager. The BWY is not associated with any guru; it had been run by groups of volunteers and elected committee members.

*“And somehow the work, the involvement and the training of the diploma courses, as you know, up to now, most of the (local) teachers ...are people I’ve trained. ...It was a situation really I just got on and did it... The thing I found though, and I think very strongly about this, there was not the training to teach the courses then as there is now. So basically, I did a lot of study, **I put my courses together**, so it involved for me a lot of studying and a lot of preparation, which I learnt a lot by doing it.”* Ex-tutor *O*

*“With the Wheel of Yoga, I was very involved, with county rep, with deputy regional officer and with written work panel, and with education committee. When I started to become involved as a committee member, at one time I would support the wheel to the hilt, I would never ever have the Wheel defamed in any way. ...I’ve actually seen the development in the Wheel of Yoga. There is a very interesting article in the Spectrum this time on how they should actually go forward by having a paid, overall paid (manager). I mean if you read that, it’s making the Wheel of Yoga much more, I was going to say, **a commercial enterprise** which in these days, is what it needs.”* Ex-tutor *O*

Although *O* was retired, she was concerned about its future. She emphasized that the BWY should move away from being a volunteer-run amateur organization, and should become a professionally managed businesslike organization.

The three DCTs were obviously proud of what they had contributed to the BWY organization. In particular, tutor *D* and ex-tutor *O* taught BWY teacher training courses for many years successfully, and they helped the BWY to improve its quality of practice as the leading yoga organization in the UK. They both voiced their belief in the importance of the BWY to keep up with the time and to respond to the needs of the students. Their concerns with the commercial aspect of yoga practice, and also the need for professional administrators to run the organization as a business were shared, and it seems that the direction taken by the BWY is exactly what they wanted.

I followed the ways in which the participants developed their sense of self in relation to yoga using a modified version of Dreyfus' Skill Acquisition model. Most participants started to practice yoga as novice for physical and psychological reasons. As they learned how to move their body, how to breathe and how to relax, some wanted to know more. When those keen participants underwent a yoga teacher training course, they seemed to go through a degree of transformation, and became aware of the meaning of yoga practice in relation to their life. Some studied yoga further according to the area of most interest to them. The long-term practicing participants tried to find their own path, e.g. finding a guru and going to meditation retreats, to deepen their yoga practice and to discover their own sense of self. Then, the long-term practicing participants seemed to find a 'theory of life' through yoga, found their own meaning of life and reconciled themselves to the difficulties of their lives.

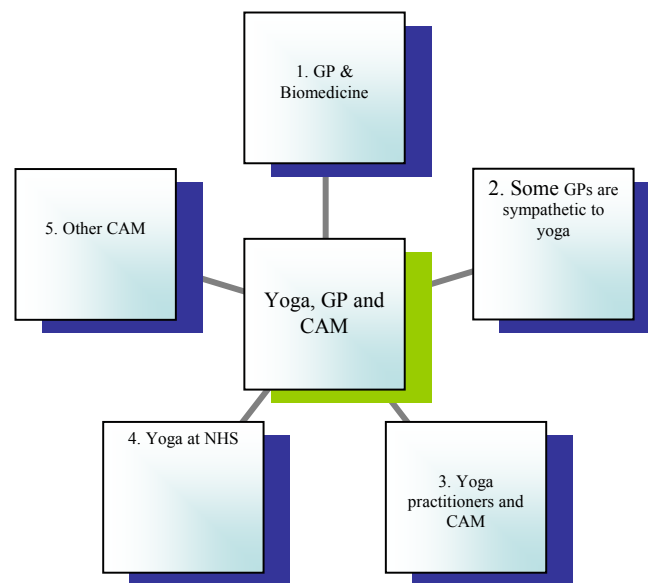
While the participants made progress in yoga, their level of yoga skill increased, their awareness of the body as 'equipment totality' (Heidegger, 1962) also improved. As Dreyfus and Dreyfus (1986, p. 4) explain, "Human understanding was a skill akin to knowing how to find one's way about in the world". Learning bodily yoga skills such as posture, breathing, relaxation and meditation, as well as the knowledge of the literature helped the participants to find their own sense of self and own theory of life.

## **5.5. CAM & GP**

While I interviewed the participants, I noticed their interest in **Complementary and Alternative Medicine** (CAM), and the individual ways in which they talked about Allopathic/orthodox/conventional/biomedicine. In relation with CAM, I use the medical anthropological term 'biomedicine' in this section for the NHS based medical practices, which are a part of broader ethnomedical and cultural systems (Rubel and Hass, 1996; Rhodes, 1996). By understanding how yoga intersects with other health care methods, this theme potentially provides an answer to how this study may be able to help to improve health and well-being of ordinary people.

In order to explore the topic of the relationship between **General Practitioners** (GPs), CAM and yoga practitioners, the theme was divided into five categories:

1. General Practitioners (GP) and Biomedicine. The way Biomedical Doctors' attitude towards yoga was narrated in the interviews.
2. Some GPs were sympathetic to yoga practice, and they did not hesitate to refer the patient to a yoga class.
3. Yoga practitioners and CAM. In the interview narratives, the ways in which the participants expressed their views on CAM were explored.
4. Yoga in the NHS. The narrative explanations of experiences with yoga in the NHS, such as Day Centres, were explored.
5. Other CAMs. The topic of CAM in relation to the participants was explored.



**Figure 8: GPs, CAM and yoga practitioners**

### ***5.5.1 GPs and biomedicine***

The participants showed varied attitudes towards GPs and biomedical doctors in hospitals. In a nutshell, biomedicine in general emphasises scientific ‘evidence-based’ approach (Sackett, 1996; Eisenberg, 2005) against CAM’s ‘opinion-based approach (Ernst *et al.*, 2005). However, its practice is carried out by grassroots practitioners with limited facilities, funding, up-to-date-knowledge and skill, man-power and time. As a result, their responses to patients’ needs often became unsatisfactory as illustrated by some of the participants’ experiences.

The following exemplars were typical expressions of participants.

Teacher *B* told me of her negative experience and disappointment with the local biomedical doctors and the hospital when she found she had cancer:

*“This was N Hospital. So I was, they were very very slow, I think I presented in about March and I didn’t actually get the operation for 10 months, very bad, it was very bad. And I presented quite early, and they were, it was just, I couldn’t get an appointment.”* Teacher *B*

After the operation, she received no guidance regarding relevant exercises and she, therefore, decided to take personal control of her bodily health by using her yoga skills.

*“I think if I hadn’t known about exercising I probably wouldn’t have stuck at it actually, but I realized, in fact **they didn’t even give me any exercises**, ...I mean it was painful underneath and I realized then that I’ve got to work these muscles so, the fact that I was a yoga teacher and I knew I’d got to work my muscles.*  
Teacher *B*

Thus *B* decided to use yoga for rehabilitation. Most of the participants explained that they were able to use yoga skills for maintaining their health. This sense of ‘**empowerment**’ over the management of their body was strongly felt in many of their narratives.

For instance, learner *I* went to doctors for their diagnosis and their opinion of her lower back pain, but wanted to keep the decision making power in her own hand. She explained,

*“I believe that these should complement the mainstream doctors. But I wouldn’t not to go to a mainstream doctor. I think you have to go to them, but you take, **you have to size up what they say**. And my GP, he doesn’t really believe in complementary therapies at all, so it’s quite funny because I know he doesn’t, and I tell him something, and I know he won’t agree with it, but I don’t care. I go to him for a diagnosis in a different way, to hear his point of view ....I know it (pain) is a nuisance to me but I knew it didn’t require surgery. So I backed off from that, and I think it was after that I found out about yoga, I just started yoga.”* Learner *I*

Ex-tutor *O* believed that CAM was more effective although biomedicine was necessary:

*“I also, with my interest in alternative therapies, and knowing my background as a trained nurse, I’ve actually gone the other way, OK, I do feel that allopathic medicine is necessary. I mean for instance, last year I had an emergency surgery in the hospital just from the road. There I think there is more, **I think complementary or alternative therapies are more effective, because they get to the root of the problem. The allopathic medicine only treats the symptoms.**”*

Ex-tutor *O*

The participants narrated various experiences with their GPs and hospital doctors. *B* mentioned negative experiences, and *I* and *O* said that biomedical doctors were necessary, but that CAMs were useful to their users. On the whole, no participants expressed that yoga could replace biomedicine, but yoga and biomedicine should complement each other. There was also a strong sense of independence towards maintaining their bodily health using yoga skills. Some of them started yoga because of their health problems, and they thought that yoga gave them the ‘power’ to manage their body and health. Ex-tutor *O* emphasised that a holistic approach of yoga was better than biomedicine because it treated the root of the problem.

On the other hand, GPs’ attitudes towards yoga remains still ambivalent, although I had the impression that GPs’ attitude towards yoga teachers was becoming kinder than before.

### **5.5.2 Some GPs were sympathetic to yoga**

Two participants, teacher *A* and *L*, were 2 participants who had a positive opinion of their GPs. *A* originally thought against going to a GP for help when her husband became ill in the late 1970s.

*“...the thought of going to a doctor and getting loads of tablets which they were giving out, as we know, like sweets then, I thought ‘No, I think I’ll go back to yoga’.”* Teacher *A*

Instead of going to a GP, she went back to practice yoga. However, she said that her current GP was enthusiastic towards yoga and other CAMs. In her opinion, GPs’ attitudes towards yoga seemed to have tremendously changed over the years. As she said:



***“My GP, he loves yoga. He loves everything to do with yoga”*** Teacher A

Learner L had been with an unhelpful GP, but after changing GP practices, she had a sympathetic GP who referred her to the hospital unit for therapeutic activities where she was introduced to yoga. L was appreciative of her GP's referral:

*“I had a particularly good GP at the time. I was with one GP practice which wasn't very helpful. I changed to a different practice, and she was very good...”*

***“It was a GP's introduction to N Hospital. Yes, what was called ADTU then, there were different sessions you could join in.”*** Learner L

Only 2 participants were helped by their GPs to have an opportunity to try CAM.

From the available data, it was not possible to draw a conclusion quantitatively since the sample size was too small, and generalizability was not the purpose of this study.

However, the general trend seemed to be changing in favour of CAM. Berman (2001, p. vii) says, “It is a rare physician these days who has not had a patient asking about an unconventional treatment for their condition”, although physicians and consumers alike do not have enough information about their effectiveness nor safety.

Luff and Thomas (2005) suggest that, in 1995, 6 % of GP practices in England had a complementary care practitioner working on the premises, 21 % of practices had a staff member who provided a complementary therapy to the patients, and 25 % of practices made referrals for complementary therapist. Their research findings suggest that there is a growing trend towards the integration of complementary therapies in the primary care, although there are a number of issues such as funding, equity and service methods.

However, there is a huge range of complementary therapies available in the CAM market; Ernst (2005, p. 295) finds that some of them do not have positive therapeutic value, although he evaluates that yoga has ‘promising evidence for effectiveness in asthma, cardio-vascular risk factors and other conditions with no serious adverse effects’. So far, there have been a small number of cases of adverse effects reported (NHS Evidence, 2010). This suggests that precaution and appropriate application of yoga to certain medical conditions should be carefully considered. Moreover, yoga therapists need to be trained and properly qualified in an appropriate manner.

### 5.5.3 *Yoga practitioners and CAM*

In general, the participants showed various degrees of interest in CAM. However, a majority of the participants were not clearly aware that yoga was a part of CAM. This was mainly due to the fact that they considered yoga not only as a treatment for ill health but also as a way to improve their quality of life, and even, in some cases, as a spiritual practice. On the other hand, most yoga teacher participants taught various people with health conditions in classrooms, or health related premises. Teacher *A* had remedial yoga training, and was keen to teach disabled people, MS sufferers, and mentally ill people. Tutor *D* was enthusiastic about developing a training course for teachers who wanted to teach 'The third age yoga'. Teacher *E* had remedial yoga training, and taught elderly people in the class. Tutor *F* taught mental health patients in the NHS settings. Teacher *G* studied 'low-back-pain' yoga and helped students with this condition. Teacher *N* talked about increasing the number of students with various health problems.

Among them, tutor *D*, Ex-tutor *O* and trainee student *M* were qualified nurses. Andrews and Hammond (2005) says that the largest 'single job' category from which CAM therapists come is nursing. They suggest that 'push' factors coming from the NHS can be difficult working conditions, pressures and stress, frustrations and unsatisfactory job changes. 'Pull' factors into CAM can be closer interpersonal patient-therapist relationships and the ability to help patient to a greater degree. When a yoga practitioner undertakes a teacher training course, being a qualified nurse is an asset in so far as it assumes knowledge of anatomy and physiology. The caring nature of the nursing profession may encourage some nurses to acquire yoga therapeutic skills.

In general, yoga as a CAM tends to have more positive reports than other CAMs (Ernst *et al.*, 2006; Heelas, 2006; Ernst, 2005; Faulkner and Layzell, 2005; Williams, 2005). Ernst *et al.* (2006) also mention that, according to a large UK consumer survey, yoga leads to more patient-satisfaction than any other CAM modality.

However, yoga as a therapeutic modality is offered in only 0.6 % cases, and the percentage of therapists is 1.2 %, compared to the top five categories. Massage therapists represent 17.6%; homeopathic therapists, 17.6 %; reflexologists, 15.5 %;

psychotherapists, 15.3 % and osteopaths, 15.0 % (Andrews and Hammond, 2005). In order for yoga to be recognized as a CAM, it may need further efforts to establish its status.

#### **5.5.4 Yoga at the NHS**

There were some participants who taught yoga at NHS hospitals and other health centres where they were paid by the NHS. For example, teacher *A* and tutor *F* talked about their experience of teaching yoga to psychiatric patients and MS sufferers.

Teacher *A* described her classes:

*“I have a couple of classes in psychiatric clinics, and the numbers there in these clinics can vary. I have, one of the psychiatric clinics, its girls with anorexia, that I meet and in the other one general, general malaises of psychological field. But, depending on how many people are in the clinic at the time, it can vary anything, 3 to maybe 7-8, something like that.”* Teacher *A*

Tutor *F* was initially introduced to yoga at a prenatal clinic as pregnancy yoga. Upon qualifying as a yoga teacher later on, *F* taught yoga for psychiatric patients with the NHS:

*“...it had already given me inroads to **mental health**, and an occupational therapist actually contacted me through, well actually came to my class as a student and knew that I’ve worked in that sector and then suggested that I come along, meet her boss. And I’ve worked for the mental health with the H Hospital for about 10 years...”* Tutor *F*

Some participants were teaching yoga at various medical institutions as paid yoga teachers. Apart from Teacher *A* and Tutor *F* above, Tutor *D* ran courses to train yoga teachers to teach elderly people in hospitals and nursing homes.

Although yoga became popular, many social science researchers treat yoga separately from other CAMs, and call it ‘spiritual practice’ (Vincent and Furnham, 1998), or ‘mind-body therapy’ (Fulder, 1996).

Yoga as a part of CAMs appeared to be getting more readily accepted by the general public (NHS evidence, 2010). Some NHS web-sites focus on yoga and its usefulness for

certain illnesses (2006). As yoga teaching participants talked about their experience in the NHS sector, their role appeared to be one of '*yoga teacher*'. In order for them to become professional and legitimate yoga therapists, the NHS recognises that there should be a regulated professional organization for qualified yoga therapists to be used for referrals (2010). However, there has been an effort to build a professional body such as British Council of Yoga Therapy (BCYT), it is still in early days (ibid.).

#### 5.5.5 Other CAM

There were some CAMs in which the Participants showed some degree of interest. These included spiritual healing, massage, acupuncture and homeopathy.

Teacher *B* had a positive experience with **Electromagnetic Crystal Therapy** when she was waiting for a cancer operation. In this case, teacher *B* was a client rather than a therapist. *B* described the experience as positive and very remarkable.

*"...when I was ill, when I had the cancer, I went to a lady who did... electromagnetic crystal therapy... And I went from this terrible pain state to no pain. Yes, no pain. And I began to feel stronger... I was fit as a fiddle, I was walking and running and, I was really feeling fit. And when I had the operation, and they have to take out some of the lymph nodes to test, one of the lymph nodes was scarred because it had had the cancer but the crystal healing had helped it like to go back, helped contain it."* Teacher *B*

Learner *H* tried osteopathy when he felt pain, but with negative results:

*"a few years ago I had a bad move, shifting a bed and... I dislocated my shoulder... And I went to see again an **osteopath**. They massage and they do a little bit of something, but it did not solve the problem."* Learner *H*

Student teacher *M* was a qualified and practicing reflexologist. *M*'s motivation to become a reflexologist was motivated by wanting not to see biomedical doctors, although her occupation had been a trained Nurse. She explained how she became qualified in it.

*“I was qualified 3 years ago, at the H School of **reflexology**, and I’ve got my diploma, I’m registered with the association of reflexologist, where most of my clients come from, because I am on the web-site. I was in bed I remember, I’m very, very healthy usually, but I remember I was having a kidney infection about 4 years ago. I never ever go to doctors if I can avoid it... and I was reading a book on reflexology, something came up, and I thought, “Gosh, this is just what I need!” The next day, I phoned up the school of reflexologist...”* Student teacher *M*

With trial and error, learner *H* did not appreciate osteopathy, and preferred yoga, whereas teacher *B* felt that Electromagnetic Crystal Therapy was very effective for her cancer as a complementary therapy. Student teacher *M* even became a qualified reflexologist.

On the whole, none of the participants showed disinterest towards CAM. In general, they had an attitude of open-mindedness and holistic acceptance towards non biomedicine. I attribute the fact that practicing yoga and becoming used to managing their own health made the individuals try and test other CAMs when they felt the need. There were a number of other CAMs mentioned by the participants during the interviews. On the whole, none of the participants said that they wanted to dismiss biomedicine, but they considered that CAMs had their place in the health care system. Asian medicines such as Chinese herbs, massage and acupuncture were mentioned by Learner *I* and Teacher *N*, but the quality of their practice was uncertain. It appears that the issue of the acceptance of CAM as a legitimate medical system is still under debate (Resch and Ernst, 1999; Bivins, 2007).

The topic of the efficacy of CAM is controversial. On one hand, yoga has received a number of positive reports, but on the other hand, there have been strong criticism towards some therapies such as homeopathy (Goldacre, 2009; Ernst *et al.*, 2006). As CAM, as a whole, is becoming increasingly popular, a body of evidence coming from further high quality research is needed. The jury still seems to be out about their efficacy and safety.

## 5.6. Relationships

Yoga practice is always done in relationships, i.e. these relationships are between the practitioner and their inner self, between the teacher and the students, between the practitioner and their family. Yoga relationships also involve teaching lineage, practicing friends and yoga communities, as well as the wider modern society. This theme is one of the key ideas for understanding ‘the self’ for modern yoga practitioners. According to Heidegger (1962), Being-in-the-world is ‘Being’ with others; this is one of his central ideas of phenomenology.

I have divided the ‘relationship’ discussion into 4 key categories following the data analysis:

1. The relationship with the self.
2. The relationship with the family.
3. The relationship with yoga community
4. The relationship with the society.

### 5.6.1 *Relationship with the self*

The relationship with oneself is the most complicated and controversial point of this category, since yoga is said to be a long established method for (inner) self discovery which was explored in Chapter 2. Moreover, ‘what is the self?’ is a complicated and almost indefinable question. Therefore, I use the term in the same way the participants did. This included ‘myself’, ‘my *the other self*’, ‘the higher self’, ‘spiritual side of the self’ and so forth.

As teachers *A* and *B* described a separated self in times of crisis, I explore what kind of ‘**the self**’ they were talking about:

*“...there have been hard times but in terms of coping with the crises and the hard times, I actually, it might be a little trick that I use, but it’s also very yogic, I actually find that at times like that, I can detach myself from the little. So I can, and I have done, certainly at moments of crisis, what I call the real A is here and the little A is doing what is necessary. So the real A, the true A, the spirit, whatever we would call it, the strong one that is able to do it, has detached herself and is looking at the other A who is also important because the little A has to get on with things. But because the mind and the spirit are detached, then you’re not*

*affected that much by it, your body is not going to get run down because you have already left the body, that I found I could do.” Teacher A*

In the Heideggerian sense, it could be understood as a separation between ‘das Man’ and ‘the authentic Self’. But from a yogic point of view, it is said to be a standard meditational practice to observe how the restless mind plays with detachment, so that the mind will settle down in peace.

Patanjali’s Yoga Sutra (PYS) says at the beginning, “*Yoga is the settling of the mind./When the mind has settled, we are established in our essential nature, which is unbounded Consciousness./ Our essential nature is overshadowed by the activities of the mind.*”(translated by Shearer, 1982, p. 49). The idea of ‘the self’ described in the scripture had been adopted and lived by the participant A.

Teacher B narrated a similar experience of separation of the self:

*“the strange thing really was when I was, before I had my operation and in that time while I was waiting, when I knew that I was going to have it done, it was like I was outside myself looking in, and this was really quite weird because I was, like it wasn’t me. This is my best friend who’s got a problem but it wasn’t me, and I was like on the ceiling looking down. I was outside myself... So I was concerned about this person because she was like my best friend but it wasn’t me and I had a very strong sense of that.” Teacher B*

B described her separated self as a best friend. Being divided and emotionally detached from suffering kept her in equilibrium. A and B described very similar experiences in this respect. However their experiences may be unique in nature and the majority of yoga participants used yoga practice and relaxation for stress relief in a more straightforward way.

A and B were very experienced and learned yoga teachers. They knew PYS by heart and tended to refer to the text. The Sutra says: “*The Self and the contents of the mind are completely separate. Our natural experience, which is directed to outer fulfilment, fails to distinguish between them. Sanyama (concentration technique) on inner fulfilment brings knowledge of the Self*”(Translated by Shearer, 1982, p. 103).” In other words, it is a method to separate the pure self from everyday consciousness, and lead ‘the Self’ to be eventually free. This idea is not dissimilar to Heidegger’s (1962) *authentic self* and

*das Man*. Tutor *D* described a similar experience when she undertook Vipassana meditation:

*And the first 4 days, you would be amazed, the stuff that comes out you didn't think you possessed. All the negative stuff, the negative energy you haven't had a chance to look at it, and leave it aside, and you go deeper to see, look about the reaction, how you react to what comes up, and you get to leave that, and **you get like you are just standing beside watching you without becoming involved with it.**"* Tutor *D*

However, the separation is within the mind itself, where the self becomes the observer and the self being observed, or the self that is stable and hidden and the self that is always restless and agitated. In PYS, Patanjali explains that they are the two elements *purusha* (the essence) and *prakriti* (the matter) that make up the self and the world (Shearer, 1982; Tachikawa, 2008)). The idea of two selves and eventually the discovery of an inner peace often came up in yoga practitioners' conversations as it did for the participants above.

In a yoga class, after posture work, and sometimes during relaxation and meditation, people often cry with relief, which was an emotional resolution. Teacher *C* and teacher *N* respectively described those tearful moments:

*"I have cried during yoga sessions... three times I had to cry quite strongly, all my emotions. Through yoga, yoga released my emotions."* Teacher *C*

*"And then on the 6<sup>th</sup> week she used a different set of wording to talk us into the deep relaxation, and something went "ping" inside me and the tears just welled up in the corners of my eyes and trickled on the sides of my cheeks, and nobody knew I was crying, just me, it was just fantastic. It was so wonderful, I relaxed. And prior to that, I didn't know that I was tense. And I'd been lying on the floor, absolutely rigid, probably holding my fists or really tight, and not knowing how to relax."* Teacher *N*

As Merleau-Ponty called this bodily experience the 'zero point' of the embodied self, and that this embodied self is in relation with the world (1962). As the '*das Man*' of the everyday self goes about and carries on living, the sufferings of the authentic self quietly accumulate inside one's unconscious. After some yogic posture work, practitioners lay down on the floor quietly, and it is often at this moment that people



shed tears of catharsis. Heidegger (1962) sees this receptive state as a ‘clearing’, an open space where the true self can reveal itself.

### **5.6.2 Relationship with the family**

The participants might have practiced yoga independently, but they all had families. The well-being of the person was often dependent on the family members, or was influenced by them. Being a yoga practitioner caused positive or sometimes negative effects on the family relationships. For instance, teacher *A* explained that continuing yoga practice sustained her family cohesion. Some families, such as those of teachers *B*, *C*, *E* and tutor *D* allowed the participants to carry on, but did not become involved. Other families, tutor *F* and learners *H*, *I*, *K* became involved and positively supported the participant. One participant, teacher *N*, went through a period of antagonism from her partner.

Teacher *B* explained that her family did not get involved with yoga, but accepted her practice:

*“My family don’t do any yoga. But again, you see, that’s ok. I wouldn’t try to make them do yoga, it would drive them mad, wouldn’t it. But they’re quite happy for me to lie on the floor, I often lie on the floor and do some yoga and they see what I’m doing while they’re watching the television.”* Teacher *B*

Learner *I* had been a yoga student, and explained that yoga practice had had positive effects on her husband who suffered from back pain:

*“...my husband started yoga about two or three years after me, because he could see the benefits. And he had had problems with his back, and he started going along, I would go one evening and he would go the other evening, and he found it very beneficial as well.”* Learner *I*

Similarly, learner *K* appreciated yoga practice and the positive influence on their relationship:

*“I think all relationship benefit from **joint experiences**. And we are not at the same level by any means, but there are certain poses that are couple based, and we have practiced a few of those. And that’s good because I am able to support*

*her as long as she is trying to do, obviously she has helped me. So it's working."*  
Leaner K

Teacher N narrated the difficult period she went through with her husband after she came back from her initiation in the USA.

*"just my relationship with my husband, that was challenged. It changed the dynamics of our relationship. In the end, it was for the better, but at the time, it was very difficult. Because I think, I have probably been, there had been a co-dependency prior to that. When I came back I was much more independent. ...that experience of him being away from home for 3 weeks, and then coming back, enlightened to understand sort of experience I had had. And then, he really understood, then we were back on the even keel, if it hadn't been through that experience with him, I think, we would still probably be having difficulties in some sort of way. It was **a huge developmental thing for both of us.**"* Teacher N

Some families just accepted the participant's practice of yoga, and others showed a keen interest. It seemed that some families took it with affectionate detachment and, sometimes, some of the members joined in of their own accord. In general, yoga seemed somehow to be helping the family relationships of the participants. It was rare to hear about a strong reaction from a family member, like in the case of teacher N, but she was the only one who went abroad and received an initiation from a guru. When one person goes through a transformative process of initiation, it changes the family dynamics. When both N and her husband went through comparative rites of passage, they came to understand the self-transforming process of an initiation experience, and reconciled.

### ***5.6.3 Relationship with yoga community***

Although yoga can be practised in isolation, the knowledge of yoga has been handed down through teachers and is practiced within the unique traditions of yoga communities. In this section, yoga classes as mini communities, and the close relationships between teachers and their students are discussed.

#### ***Yoga classes as mini communities***

Various aspects of yoga classes where teachers and students interacted and shared yoga practice were mentioned by tutor F and ex-tutor O.

F talked about her yoga classes and explained that their location had moved from Local Adult Education to private classes:

*“I mean, fortunately, I’m saying this, out of a health club I will get maybe **one new person a week**, maybe two or three but the rest are regular so you can develop. But I feel that it would be, everybody’s got their own time, we’ve all got our own timing. And that is the one thing that I really miss with Adult Education because you could have that course and you could say “Right I’ve got the beginners’ course, we will only do sectional breathing, then perhaps in year two or about three we will introduce a bit of Pranayama, maybe we might even get onto the alternative nostril breathing” that sort of thing...It’s the **drop-in classes**, and this is the way that we’re going, into the drop-in classes more and more.”*  
Tutor F

*“I would say that, I mean today I had 24 people in my class, last night it was 21, so I must see round about 150 people a week which again makes life interesting, because every time I go into a different class, I meet different people, and I get such a richness from these classes, and so I’m not going into the office and meeting the same person each day.”* Tutor F

F said that she regularly saw about 150 people weekly, with new people joining constantly, which meant that she could not make a long-term teaching plan to deepen or develop students’ practice. But she said that it was how yoga was increasingly taught. F’s sentiment was also shared by some other teachers.

Ex-tutor O used to go to strict Iyengar classes, and she felt that she understood the flow of energy through the strong physical work:

*“And one thing that I did the Iyengar teacher training with Silva Mater... People tend to feel yoga therefore the teacher is relaxed and is approachable and is calm and so on. She was totally unapproachable, and actually, she was a bit horrifying. She was, wouldn’t say not at all, you feel that she knew. We used to work through all the standard postures, and inverted, shoulder-stand, headstand, and a few minutes relaxation that was the routine. Week after week, month after month, we did that in Iyengar way... what I also found was **doing that strong physical work I could pick up the Gita and understand it**, I’m sure because of the flow of Prana, the flow of energy that Mr Iyengar was feeling.”* Ex-tutor O

The atmosphere of average yoga classes is quite different from one another. The participant discussed different aspects of yoga classes from both the student's and the teacher's point of view. For instance, tutor F discussed the changing nature of yoga

classes, i.e. from local council organized A-E classes to privately run drop-in classes. Ex-tutor *O* commented how her Iyengar teacher was strict, but she understood the flow of energy through the strong physical work. While the former observed the recipe-like approach of modern-day yoga classes, the latter focused on the disciplined side of yoga and got more satisfaction from learning in a strict teaching class. On the whole, when participants came to yoga classes, what they expected, or what they got out of it, varied according to individuals. Smith (2008) asserts that discipline and authority lie at the heart of Indian guru-guided yoga tradition. In comparison with this, Newcombe (2008) argues that the tradition of BWY is autodidactic in having developed Adult Education classes, and taken a softer approach to discipline, favouring accountability and educational legitimacy. The BWY takes a secular educational approach to teaching, with mainly Adult education classes, and, as a result, the nature and contents of its teaching are different from those of guru-guided schools. However, by leaving Adult Education classes and running private drop-in classes, many teacher participants seemed to have another problem, i.e. less continuity.

### ***The close relationship between teachers and their students***

Traditionally, the bond between the guru and his chela (disciple) was sacred and absolute (Eliade, 1969). Feuerstein (1997) explains that yoga was originally an initiatory tradition that requires from an aspirant a period of discipleship devoted both to rigorous self-discipline and to a guru. The different nature of modern close bonds between the teachers and their students were described by student *I*, teachers *B*, teacher *E*, and tutor *M*. The way in which the nature of the teacher-student relationship has become a more friendly companionship since ancient time in India can be seen in the exemplars below.

Teacher *B* described her first teaching class which she started 15 years ago and is still running. She considered the students as good friends:

*“Well straight away I started my own class because before I qualified to get practice I had my own class, which I’m still doing that class. And I still have people that have come for years and years. I’ve got one lady who’s been coming ever since 1992 and she’s still coming to my class...they’re like my friends. And they’re lovely, **they’re like a whole load of friends**, and still keep coming back and back.”* Teacher *B*

Teacher *E* went to a yoga class, liked it and stayed with the teacher for 10 years. Then, she joined a teacher training course so that she could learn more. Although her idea of yoga had changed, she realized then that it constituted the foundation of the learning she had done since. *E* described the relationships with her teachers:

*“All I know is that I joined an adult education class, and straight away, this was one off class I started, I joined a class with J. I went along once a week. And I went through the basic Hatha Yoga practices with relaxation, breathing, just virtually did it, and I think that is the thing you just have to do, **you have to take it bona fide in a way, and important thing is just keep doing it.** And that’s what I did. I just did it every week, until, I suppose, after 10 years or so...I knew that I wanted to know more. So, I really joined the teaching group not with the idea necessary for teaching, but just knowing more. And we obviously started anatomy and philosophy and, it just went on from there. I suppose, I don’t really, I think my idea of yoga has changed over the years. **I think I haven’t realized earlier on just how much the kind of I was receiving had followed from that areas.**”* Teacher *E*

Tutor *D* started teaching over 20 years ago, and kept teaching the same group:

*“I really love teaching yoga... when I started running my own classes, the first year, I had 2 weeks off that was over Christmas, because they didn’t want to stop and I didn’t want to stop... I honestly can’t see myself when I am not teaching my 2 classes, because I just **love those classes... Most of them are coming for ages.** A lot of them started off as students, and I trained them to be teachers, and so on.”* Tutor *D*

It seemed that there was a strong teacher-students bond, long-lasting when both parties enjoyed and shared the yoga practice in the class. Their attendance was voluntary, and at the end of the course, there was no qualification unless one undertook a diploma teacher’s course. There seemed to be genuine affection among them and enjoyment of being in each other’s company, sharing physical exercise, relaxation, and so forth. An anthropologist, Tönnies, termed this kind of community *Gemeinschaft* implying a spontaneous, consciously sought and more emotionally laden relationship (Azarya, 1996). The narratives of BWY classes used the terms ‘a load of friends’, ‘affinity’, ‘love those classes’, and reported having a pleasurable regular activity in which personal attachment mattered more than strict discipline under the authoritative figure of a guru.

#### ***5.6.4 Relationship with society***

This section explores yoga practice in relation to society as a whole. The previous section looked at the nature of relationships within yoga classes, but here, the emphasis is on how modern society affects yoga practice.

The majority of participants who were long-term yoga practitioners started yoga at an Adult Education (AE) class. However, around 2000 – 2004, AE classes started to shrink, and a number of yoga teacher participants moved to private classes to teach because of the reform of the AE system and the subsequent reduction in funding. Finger and Asún (2001) link the decline of publicly supported adult education with postmodern social change. Adult Education originally started as the emancipation of working class, but it became a privileged leisure activity for the middle classes and middle age group in the latter part of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. In our modern society, adult learning has become private individualized activity with a multiplicity of choices. Adult Education Centres thus have to compete with numerous other institutions for students.

Fieldhouse (1996) explains that by the 1990s, the government recognized that continuous life-long education was the single most important means of remaining competitive in a global economy, and therefore emphasized the increase of vocational courses for the labour market. Following the AE reform, the clientele of yoga classes gradually shifted from the relaxed learners of Adult Education towards the commercially-based physical activity consumers in private classes, or medically orientated CAM customers at NHS or sport centres. For instance, health clubs and gyms offer yoga exercise classes, and at various NHS sites, classes are also offered to clients including mental health patients and pregnant women. Health centres may also attract chronically ill older generations. Various cruise ships and yoga holiday packages may offer a more target-group-orientated yoga. Accordingly, the ethos of yoga practice seems to be changing too. The BWY ensures that its members are insured against a possible law suit. The organization has implemented a no-touching policy in the classroom. A medical form must be filled out by the student at the beginning of the course, and the teachers must inform the students about contra indications and modified

forms of postures. There are also market forces operating in the yoga community, and consequently, just as teachers can choose where and how to teach privately, students can, using media and internet information, choose the kind of yoga class they want.

Next, I consider the on-going shift of yoga teaching providers from Adult Education to private classes. Teacher *E* explained why she made the move. Teacher *G* shared a similar experience, and teacher *N* said that she hated the Adult Education reform and its subsequent effects on teaching, in particular its increased amount of paperwork. Ex-tutor *O* warned against the possibility of lawsuits for injuries and against the choice of teachers offered to potential learners on the internet.

*E* explained,

*“I gave up, that right, H changed the system of recruiting the teachers, and they changed the system completely, and put up the fees, and the students all walked out in protest to the fees going up enormously. And they came over and said, “E, you start a class and we will come to you”, that I did, I started up on my own that time, and all defected. And I still teach those ladies.....”* Teacher *E*

Teacher *G* said,

*“I taught for years with D County but they eventually, after years and years, they put the fees up and some of my class couldn’t really afford the fees and I knew they would drop out, so I said to them “If I go privately, you will pay less and I will earn more,” ... then on I went privately, I was very sorry I couldn’t teach for D anymore, but that was that really. I think a lot of classes folded after that.”* Teacher *G*

Teacher *N* described,

*“...hate its paperwork. I’d like to turn all my classes to private classes. Hate papers. It’s just there are relevant paper work and irrelevant paper work, and the majority is irrelevant, just filling forms and generating awful lots of papers which need to be thrown away, as far as I am concerned. And the students are resenting it too. And they have to stay in, and fill in the forms now... an intrusion on the yoga class, and it actually doesn’t add anything to be a Yoga instrument, because it’s so generalized. One of my classes was axed from the W College, and I took it on privately, and the students are so much happier with a nicer venue and they don’t have paper work either.”* Teacher *N*

The change in government policy towards Adult Education funding as well as its leaning towards vocational studies moved yoga teachers out of AE courses.

Accordingly, yoga teaching in private classes and commercial or health venues will be going through some changes, and its long-term effects will be seen in the future.

Tutor *F*'s story below illustrated another aspect of yoga teaching in modern society in so far as yoga teaching is now career oriented. She began teaching with AE and stayed with it until 2005. She also worked in the mental health unit at a hospital, and at various health clubs. Her gradual shift of teaching venues from AE sites to various others epitomised the social movement in general, concerning not only yoga but a number of CAMs, and private yoga teaching has become commercially viable with a large enough customer base to support it. There is an estimated yoga population of 2.6 million (see in chapter 1).

*“...about 15 months into my training, got me my first job as a yoga teacher at Adult Education. And I actually stayed with Adult Education for, from 1989 until December 2005, so it was a long time.” Tutor F*

*“really my yoga experience was just getting classes and then I was very fortunate, somebody asked me to substitute for a counselling service **for an alcoholic group** and basically I went along and covered a couple of classes and then they offered me the job. And there I felt my yoga could take me in another direction...and I've worked for **the mental health with the H Hospital** for about 10 years, so and, part of their program for patients, or clients. The other area, then **health clubs** became quite popular and I've worked with several health clubs now.” Tutor F*

*“...I do two therapy classes, one for an older clientele where we just do chair yoga, which is for **senior citizens centre**. And then I do a group for women ...which is community and they're only an hour, and of course my work at **H Hospital**, so I do maybe three groups, and then I get most of my work within **health clubs**.” Tutor F*

Ex-tutor *O* emphasized some of the hazards of yoga teaching such as possibilities of lawsuits for injuries, the no-touching policy, and the lack of continuity:

*“Now we have to be so careful that we don't introduce **injuries** ...we could actually touch and probably adjust, there is a restriction on that now, so that students don't suffer injuries.” Ex-tutor O*

*“...with the health centres, they can actually have the odd lesson so there's **no follow through**. But at the same time, with the health clubs now employing many different teachers, students now say “I didn't like her, but I liked him” or “I*



*didn't like him, but I liked her". But students now are getting more selective... At one time there was not much choice and they accepted the teaching of one teacher, but now there's a lot of choice and I don't think that's a good thing."*  
Ex-tutor O

I tried to understand some of the social forces operating on current yoga practice, and the various aspects of modern consumer-orientated yoga. Rapid changes in yoga practice and the increase of the number of yoga practitioners were riding on the same social movement. The AE yoga classes used to be supported by the middle classes, predominantly white, middle-aged women (Heelas, 1996; Newcombe, 2008), but now the spectrum of yoga practitioners is very broad, and the premises of yoga practice have become ubiquitous (Campbell, 2007): from private homes and hospitals, to gyms, and wherever people come together. One of the roles of the BWY is to maintain and safeguard the safety of its members and learners, and to avoid damaging conflicts in its classes.

### **5.7 Spirituality**

'Being Spiritual' or 'Spirituality' is a common idea used in the narratives of yoga practitioners and other holistic practitioners (Heelas, 2006; Tacey, 2004). Heelas and Woodhead (2005) estimate that so called holistic milieu group activities in a typical Sunday in Britain involves 4.6 million people. Heelas and Woodhead (2005) call it the spiritual revolution of subjective-life, which is replacing the traditional religion. In Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs, spiritual needs come at the top of the pyramid for self-actualization (Maslow, 1968). However, what constitutes the word 'spiritual' remains fuzzy and ambiguous (York, 2004). So, rather than defining what it means, I will explore how it was used by the participants.

In this theme, I divided spirituality into 4 categories:

1. What 'spirituality' was for secular BWY members.
2. How 'spirituality' was expressed: awareness of the inner self.
3. How 'spirituality' was achieved: the importance of Embodiment.
4. How they learned 'spirituality': the transmission of yoga knowledge.

### 5.7.1 What ‘spirituality’ was for secular BWY members

Teacher *A* expressed her first encounter with spirituality in the spirit of the 1960s hippy counter-culture:

*“I had, at about age 17 or 18 because it was the 60s and very hippy kind of times, love and peace, and I was very much a hippy, and I started to go to a yoga class.”*  
Teacher *A*

Teacher *F* discovered her spirituality through the process of learning about the body, which was going back to the ideal state in which we were born:

*“I suppose now maybe I borrow whole from people who have been influenced by their study of osteopathy, and Feldenkrais method of how we are and movement, and going back to the natural reflexes of the body, and how those may have changed, and how we have modified the natural reflexes of the body by the life’s experiences, and how ways of yoga practice really trying to sort of strip away, and **get back to the so called ‘ideal’** state that we are in when we arrived on this earth.”* Teacher *F*

Student-teacher *M* equated being spiritual with lots of meditation and visualization as opposed to posture work:

*“it was a very strange experience because it was taught by someone who was very **spiritual**, and I don’t remember doing postures, I must have done some posture work, but, lots were meditation and visualization, I really don’t remember doing very much posture work in the class.”* Student-teacher *M*

Teacher *G* described how she felt after she lost her husband:

*“The spirit is, **we’re all spiritual beings** and the body just is like an old jacket and you just discard it and the spirit goes on. So, that’s something that I would never have believed... but I feel now that there’s a lot more to it than that, that mankind is a spiritual being rather than just the body, which our culture does tell us that we are just a body and a mind and once the body dies the mind dies as well.”*  
Teacher *G*

Teacher *G* expressed a more aesthetic and other-worldly view of ‘spirit’ than others. She explained that her peacefulness might be the result of long-term yoga practice, and that she was drawing the ideas of spirituality from classical yoga texts.

In the above examples, there were different views regarding what spirituality was and how it should be maintained. A vague idea of indefinable ‘spirituality’ was not mentioned when the participants discussed posture work. Instead, some of the participants talked about spirituality in relation to the philosophy of yoga, which was represented by classical texts such as the Bhagavad-Gita, Patanjali’s Yoga Sutra, and the Upanishads. However, teacher *E* discovered that the original state of our spiritual being was based on bodily reflexes. The word ‘spirituality’ was used to express various meanings. Next, I will discuss it with some exemplars.

### 5.7.2 How ‘spirituality’ was expressed: awareness of the inner self

The exemplars in this section are aspects of expression of ‘awareness of the inner self’ through yoga practice, as yoga seeks ‘the sacred’ within (Eliade, 1969). The following participants explained how they experienced the inner self. According to the exemplars below, the mind became calmer and more open when the inner self became the focal point of awareness, while working with the breath and meditation.

Teacher *B* described,

*“I think Yoga just gives you a calmness, about things, like you cope better somehow and, you’re going through these things but its ok, just feel that, it just gives you. In the end I just feel I’m living in a **very calm place** and things can be quite manic, but **I’m still in my centre**, I feel very centred and like it can’t throw me.”* Teacher *B*

Learner *I* explained,

*“I think it does because I was thinking the other day in fact that yoga's promoting, **meditation**, it does help you to be still and it does help you to get into the frame of mind which is like prayer, so it helps you. It should, as far as I can see it should help to promote prayerfulness in one’s life and I think in a little way it has.”* Learner *I*

Teacher *N* said,

*“So I shared a very very quiet class, totally focusing inward, and working with the breath. So every breath was an integral part of, breath was married to the movement, and the movement was married to the breath, so almost every breath everybody took throughout the whole hour and a half was **mindful**. And so in the end, we didn’t do a lot of stretching, we did a lot of release, and **the releasing from inside**.”* Teacher *N*

The participants tended to draw from various yoga texts in order to describe and explain those of their experiences which were important and meaningful to them. For instance, Patanjali's Yoga Sutra says "*Yoga is the settling of the mind into silence. When the mind has settled, we are established in our essential nature, which is unbounded Consciousness.*" (translated by Shearer, 1982, p. 49). Eliade (1969, p. 361) describes that yoga has a long historical tradition, and it "represents a living fossil, a modality of archaic spirituality that has survived nowhere else." Settling the mind, the perpetual goal of yoga practice, seemed to be epitomized as the participants adopted the teaching of the *calm inner self*. The participants expressed this state of the mind as 'calmness', 'prayerfulness' and 'mindfulness'.

### 5.7.3 How 'spirituality' is achieved: importance of Embodiment

The experiences of deepening spirituality and personal development for yoga practitioners are mediated by an awareness of the wholeness of the body and the mind. There have been a number of theoretical models trying to unite the body and the mind together in the past. Maslow (1968) placed physical satisfaction at the bottom, and spiritual needs at the top, in his Hierarchy of Needs. Patanjali set 8 limbs for deepening yoga practice from moral codes, physical exercises to meditation (Shearer, 1982). Hatha Yoga devised a model of 5 layers of bodies to transcend (Feuerstein, 1989, p. 126). I explore in this section how the participants explained their experience of embodiment in yoga in relation with spirituality.

Teacher C said that she felt happy after yoga practice,

*"After I practice yoga, I can't describe it, I **feel happier**. I feel uplifted. More confident, I feel more eager about life, to do things, more energetic... I felt fitter, stronger, more relaxed and I just felt better about myself, so that made me keep going back to the classes."* Teacher C

Teacher E explained that bodily perception and awareness were the key,

*"But everything you do is, to my way of thinking is in yoga, Hatha practice is remedial. Because you place your foot on the floor, you look to see if you balanced to see you foot allowing your arch to drop to see the floor, lifting up, your inner ankle is dropping. Then you work on your feet, to open the hip joints*

*out from inside. So I really think, the whole thing is remedial. But with people who are very immobile, are really have to go right back to the breath. And in all yoga practice really it is the breath that is the basis of it all. And the breath is the key to the emotions of the lungs. And it's **the relationship between the breath and the body** we can't separate, which we have separated, but we shouldn't. We need to work as a unity really."* Teacher E

Student teacher M said that focusing on the breath helped her to be aware of bodily feelings,

*"...when I entered into yoga, opposed to any physical activities, it was engaging the mind and soul. So spiritually, I felt greatly enhanced...**It is the awareness I suppose.** That's something I've never really thought about it before doing yoga. Well, I've just about shallow breathe. And I feel sometimes it's quite fragile the breath, and I feel quite anxious about it too. When I really focus on the breathing, and to realize that it is **the source of life**, and I do find each time I do breathing exercises, but I experience something different. It's never the same."* Student teacher M

Since the body is the 'modus operandi' in the world (Csordas, 1994a), the feeling of spirituality, or the uplifting experience, materialises when bodily awareness is united with a calm state of mind. As most participants mentioned, what is acting as the catalyst is the breath. As Morley (2001, p. 76) explained, "The experience of Pranayama points us to a central aspect of Merleau-Ponty's philosophy of the lived body, that is, his explication of interiority and exteriority." It seems that participants interpreted spirituality as arising from breathing practices, by uniting awareness of the body and bodily feelings. Through focusing the mind on the breathing practice, the participants became more aware of the body and the ensuing bodily emotional state, e.g. feeling good, happier, relaxed, instead of seeing themselves as the cognitive Cartesian Self.

#### **5.7.4 How they learned 'spirituality': transmission of yoga knowledge**

The way in which modern yoga practitioners gained their knowledge of yoga was quite different from that of traditional yoga practitioners in historical India. I will explore the aspects of their learning within the following 4 categories:

- 1. The modern lineage of yoga learning*
- 2. The impact of media transmission of yoga programmes*
- 3. What the BWY diploma students learned*

#### 4. *Some views towards Guru-guided yoga schools*

##### **1. *Modern Yoga lineage of yoga learning***

The BWY organizes the secular methods of disseminating yoga knowledge. They include foundation courses for beginners, a teacher training diploma course, In-Service-Training courses and various further education courses for qualified teachers, as well as guidelines and codes of ethics for grassroots classroom teaching (BWY web-site, 2009). Teaching classes have to follow set course syllabuses and teaching planning. The BWY lineage was talked about by tutor *D* as a teacher and a diploma course tutor. Teacher *E* and tutor *F* talked about the teachers whose classes they attended. Teacher *N* also talked about her guru experience in an ashram, in contrast to secular learning.

Tutor *D* explained her experience with the first teacher she had, and said that the teacher did not know how to teach:

*“So, I went and I got in Y’s class. ...she came in, the first evening...and we walked in and sat, she was there in lotus, eyes closed, and it was “Om Shante” and I was like, “Oh, God!”...We were 34 in the class, by the end of the term, we were 4, because she used to call out people by their names, and she used to pick on people....And there I didn’t know, it was not until then I thought she was the best thing after a slice of bread, but after my training, I realize how wrong her teaching was.” Tutor D*

Until the BWY started to run yoga teacher training courses, qualifications of yoga teachers were various ranging from highly disciplined guru-school teachers to virtually non-qualified people. Some of them in the 1960s and 1970s were influenced by hippy culture and newly emerging Indian/Eastern cultures, as Tutor *D*’s first teacher above seemed to have been.

*D* talked about maintaining the high standards of yoga in very practical ways: accreditation of new yoga schools into the BWY, syllabus based courses, and strict criteria. She also mentioned that the quality of courses had to be kept by the professional education board. She said that the essence of yoga was not to be foggy or ambiguous, but to be taught from a clearly written down, self-explanatory syllabus base, and standardized diploma teacher training courses which should be run by education

professionals. She insisted that the BWY must move forward with time in a more business-like manner:

*“Because we are accrediting the course, we assess their teaching, we have to look at their admin of the course. We have to look at the syllabus to see if it contains everything that needed to contain which matters... Because, what’s missing we tell them, and they bring it up to the criteria, it got a map, or **syllabus**.” Tutor D*

*“When I became chair, I said I wanted us to be the regulating body of yoga ...and I said that we wanted a new image, because we are back stuck in there 15 century. I’ve done that, we pulled that forward... I said that we need to get **CEO** now to move the organization forward. ...And we wanted **some paid people on the education committee**, director of the education to move us forward.” Tutor D*

Tutor D was proud of bringing the BWY up to the modern educational and business based organization. In order to run syllabus based courses and be accountable to the members in a business-like manner, the BWY is further moving away from teachings and mystiques based on traditional gurus’ authority. However, the members are encouraged to go out and seek other teachers for their own learning.

Teacher E talked about the group of teachers to whom she had been going regularly. Those three teachers distantly inherited the Iyengar tradition from Vanda Scaravelli, and on the way they changed it to suit their ideals of yoga practice. They were, in a sense, modern gurus in the secular modern society. Those teachers’ knowledge was based on osteopathic anatomy and physiology (Stirk, 1988), rather than on Indian traditional spirituality.

*“Because all of those teachers, all Iyengar trained, and all got injuries, some kind or other. Yes, through their yoga. And they all, because their yoga training I suppose decided to become osteopath. And when they became osteopath, they went to Vanda Scaravelli, and realized how yoga needs to be changed, and about how, maybe, Iyengar style was not very really appropriate.” Teacher E*

Tutor F’s story illustrated the way in which yoga knowledge had been transmitted in the secular BWY form. She said that the BWY provided mentors for her to progress:

*“... then I met the most inspirational person and who to this day is still **my mentor**... And I struggled to do the training, but then I was given yet **another***

*wonderful mentor. While I was doing my training, the British Wheel of Yoga allocated me a mentor.... And then, after I qualified as the DCT, M wasn't going to let me sit on my laurels... and she just said "Now, it's time, I want you to work with me."* Tutor F

On the other hand, teacher N explained her initiation experience with her guru in contrast to the above stories. This was at her initiation ceremony in the ashram in the USA:

*"At the end of the 5-6 days, we gradually purified ourselves with the in-depth yoga, ... I was in a company of lots of other people in the same room, all being initiated at the same time. It did appear afterward, though none of us spoke about it to each other in detail, that each one of us had slightly different, very different experience. And for me again, it was just a wonderful feeling of, again, the crown chakra opened, and I think, Kundalini rising, almost like, a big flame is leaping out of the top of my head. I suppose I just stayed up in that elevated state for a long time. It gave me enormous internal strength and power. It brought me into my own power, rather than being diminished, as one is in, sort of, daily life. It gave me contact with my core. So, that was very special, and of course contact with my guru as well, he had created the initiation."* Teacher N

Her story of initiation was quite different in nature from the exemplars of other BWY members. N's story must have been closest to the traditional meaning of initiation rites, which Eliade (1969) explained as 'dying to this life' and 'a rebirth to another mode of being', and to become a yogi, even though N's stay in the ashram seemed brief.

## **2. The impact of media transmission of yoga programmes**

There was a TV series on yoga run by Richard Hittleman in 1973, which had a huge influence on the general public's interest in yoga, and disseminated basic yoga knowledge (Newcombe, 2008). Teachers G and N and ex-tutor O talked about its impacts. It may illustrate the huge influence the media can have on people's acceptance of new knowledge.

Teacher G said that she started yoga because of the programme:

*"when we were living in London, there was **the Richard Hittleman series on television** and I caught that and I thought "This looks interesting", so I tried a little bit in the flat when I had time, then I found it was so relaxing, and as I said, when we were in the throes of things, I was lecturing on one side of London at Goldsmiths, and we had our first baby and the relaxation of yoga I thought "This*



*is just what I need”, so I used to practice it for myself then. And then when we went to the North, I joined a yoga class.” Teacher G*

Ex-tutor O described the popularity of it:

*“When there was a gentleman by the name of **Richard Hittleman**, and with Hittleman and two models, two of his students did **afternoon yoga programme on the television**. And those programmes were so popular, and basically, out of those programmes did start the upsurge in yoga. That was why classes were full, and around that particular classes, you know, 30, 40, 50 people which was absolutely ridiculous, because you couldn’t have contact, you couldn’t see what you were doing, you couldn’t pick up any teaching points at all. So, Richard Hittleman, in a way, was responsible for the upsurge.” Ex-tutor O*

The operative modes of building the lineages of yoga tradition have been transformed radically over the years and across the world. Yoga was historically transmitted orally from guru to disciples. Eliade (1969) wrote about the importance of gurus and initiation rites as the creation of a new body and the rebirth of a non-conditioned mode of being. Yet, as we saw from the above exemplars, modern forms of yoga practice are different from the traditional ideology. Modern forms of yoga are, above all, syncretic, secular and individualistic. However, modern yoga has been hugely influenced by images disseminated by the media, and a television program like Hittleman caused a yoga upsurge. The participants I interviewed were willing to seek out teachers of their own choice without the constraint of guru-chela (disciple) bondage (Feuerstein, 1989).

### **3. What the BWY members learned**

Ex-tutor O studied yoga with the founders of the BWY, and talked about her experiences then and now.

In the early 1970s, when the BWY was still in its infancy, people were more likely to study a so-called ‘yoga philosophy’ than anatomy and physiology. Since then, BWY activities had moved from London to the regions.

*“I remember the British Wheel of Yoga actually did have a centre in London, and that was at **Acacia House** in Acton. And people came. Because yoga in this country was in its infancy, ... the point of contact was Acacia House in Acton. And that was where I did my original teacher training with **Chris Stevens and***

***Walford Clark who were the founders of the Wheel of Yoga...That would be about the early 1970's. And we had, people came from all over the country... we had some very interesting speakers on all aspects of yoga... We covered all topics, there has never ever been a lot of teaching of anatomy, physiology but **there was always a lot of teaching on the philosophy aspect of yoga.***** Ex-tutor O

At that point, O firmly believed that the future BWY should be run by paid professionals as a business rather than by volunteers:

***“... a commercial enterprise which in these days, is what it (the BWY) needs. ... So I think it needs a complete re-organisation, and it needs to be made professional.”***  
Ex-tutor O

In the last few years, most information concerning the BWY organization is open on their web-site. The recent BWY journal shows that it has actually been employing a business manager since 2005. In 2009, the chief executive started appearing on the BWY web-site's *YouTube* pages to talk about the new developments of the organization from the business point of view. He explained that the BWY had to move with the times, and change the way in which it communicated and transmitted knowledge to members and non-members. Under his management, the BWY web-site carries information about its courses and regulations, advertisements, face-book and yoga postures. Although yoga is always a bodily experiential activity, the internet has changed the way it is presented to the public.

#### ***4. Some views towards Guru-guided schools***

Although BWY members were secular, they did have their opinions on gurus.

Teacher E had a negative opinion about gurus, and believed that people should decide for themselves what they want:

***“I don't really believe in gurus, because I don't really believe that is the real answer. I think you should try things for yourself, and not to take somebody's words. Particularly something that there is no proof, I mean what is proof, ok, what is proof, but certainly believe you should try and test things for your self rather than take in the words of somebody as being “The Truth” with Capital letters.... But you also ought to listen to other people with respect and make or try to, with your best of ability to make up your own mind.”*** Teacher E

Similarly, tutor *F* and ex-tutor *O* stated that they were open to any teaching. However, they did not want a personal guru for themselves:

*“I’m open to many practices, I’ve done Ashtanga, I’ve done a bit of Dru Yoga, I’ve not done Bikram, I’ve got a book on it somewhere. Very heavily influenced by Iyengar, but... I like freedom, and I feel the British Wheel offers me that freedom to develop, I feel that Iyengar’s great, is a great influence, is a great person...but his practice is for him, and he’s never seen me and he’s never likely to see me, so how could he perhaps dictate that that practice would be right for me... I regularly go to an Iyengar class because I do like Iyengar’s precision, I don’t agree with it all, as I’ve said, and I try, I also go to other people when I can, **I think it’s important to go to your own (learning) session because I do believe that you need to be corrected and each time I go, obviously I’m learning more.**”*  
Tutor *F*

*“I don’t have a guru and I don’t have anybody that I look up to, and I think everybody I have met has actually, for me, been fine...I don’t travel to the other end of the country to see anyone, no, I don’t think I’ve ever followed anybody....I think everybody’s teachings are acceptable, **I think that everybody has something to offer.** I think, people who follow gurus are a little bit blinkered.”*  
Ex-tutor *O*

On the whole, the majority of participants were keen to learn from various gurus and other teachers, but did not wish to follow a particular guru nor accept his authority. They remain strongly eclectic and secular in their approaches to yoga teaching. It is a uniquely traditional BWY way of self-teaching/learning.

On the other hand, Teacher *N* had a guru from Kripalu Yoga School and she had a great respect for him. She explained the reason for this:

*“I like the approach that everyone in Kripalu has, it’s spiritual at the forefront, they do classical postures in common with other classical postures of other disciplines, but then you get to hold of postures for certain amount of time, and then go into your own free flow of movement as a counter pose to the posture... And that what it is so special about it, as well as, of course, Kripalu Yoga, the actual presentation of Kripalu Yoga out to the world is by **Amrit Desai who is my guru.** And he is very special to me.”* Teacher *N*

Teacher *N* said that her guru was special, his teaching spiritual, and that he was revered. In a way, the spirituality of yoga seemed to be epitomized in her guru.

On the theme of spirituality, I explored the transmission of yoga knowledge in the BWY as opposed to that in a guru-guided school, Kripalu Yoga. From the participants' narratives, I extracted exemplars to illustrate how modern yoga practitioners understood and accepted various aspects of 'spirituality'. The secular transmission of yoga knowledge was through a syllabus-guided and standardized form of continuous learning. On the other hand, the mass media's influence had a big impact on public dissemination of popular yoga. On the whole, BWY members were encouraged to learn from teachings of other teachers and gurus, which Newcombe (2008) called 'the autodidact tradition'. In fact, most participants expressed that they wanted to be independent and take control of what they wanted to learn.

## **5.8 Summary of the findings**

In this chapter, I analysed 15 transcripts of in-depth interviews, and I explored six major themes which emerged in the previous chapter.

### ***5.8.1 Health and Well-being:***

Being healthy and well-being mattered to the participants. A majority of participants actually explained that they started yoga because they were suffering from physical illnesses or depression and mental stress. The learners started practicing postures and breathing at first. They acknowledged that postural work and relaxation helped to improve their physical health, although breathing practice helped most to change the perception of their sense of the body and mind. The newly discovered awareness of the bodily sense of the self in turn enhanced their quality of life, leading to a sense of well-being.

### ***5.8.2 Management of life crises:***

Modern yoga spread on the back of the New Age Movement and of the Human Potential Movement, and Maslow's psychological theory helped to shape their ideology. Using an adapted version of Maslow's hierarchy of human needs, life crises were analysed according to different levels of needs. The first physical needs were mostly

helped by postural work through improved fitness. Illnesses and pains were helped by empowering the participants with yoga techniques to mitigate, manage and heal various ailments. In the category of relational needs, some participants were suffering from grieving and stress. They were helped by the physical exercises and relaxation to channel and relieve the emotions. One participant was able to get over a crisis by studying the teacher training course to learn various aspects of yoga. Psychological needs in the crisis situation were supported and sustained by strengthening the body with yoga practice, and yoga philosophy provided meaning to the adversity in life. The human needs in spirituality came last as a fulfilment of life. Some long-term practicing participants tended to draw expressions from yoga texts, and they explained that they gained inner strength, independence and freedom after going through crisis situations.

### ***5.8.3 The sense of self and yoga development:***

It seemed that, as yoga practice progressed, participants gradually transformed their sense of self. Their developmental stages were analysed using an adapted version of Dreyfus's skill acquisition model, which was based on Merleau-Ponty's ideas. For this study, there were 7 stages instead of the original 5, because I found that some participants went through the two extra inner self development stages. They progressed from novice to semi-novice as they learned yoga skills. The expert stage occurred when some of them became qualified yoga teachers. They described that studying for the diploma teacher training course was a transformative experience. Then, a stage of personal searching followed in order to discover what they wanted in yoga and in life. As they deepened their yoga journey, they gradually built up their own theories of life and meaning of life, and made peace with themselves. Three participants became Diploma Course Tutors so that they could teach the next generation of teachers, and transmit their yoga knowledge to the wider population.

### ***5.8.4 CAM and GP:***

Relationships between yoga and other healthcare systems, e.g. GPs, NHS sites, other CAMs (Complementary and Alternative Medicine), particularly biomedicine, were explored, and it was discovered that yoga and some of other CAMs have become more

popular with the general public in recent years. I analysed how yoga fared in this respect with biomedicine medical practitioners and other CAMs. Most participants regarded yoga as complementary, and a means to manage their physical conditions. Thus, they explained that they could make an informed choice after attending GPs and hospitals. Some participants taught yoga at various NHS sites, and two participants were introduced to yoga at NHS clinics.

On the whole, participants were open and keen towards some other CAMs in general. It appeared that various departments of the NHS and also GPs also were integrating Yoga more and more as a treatment modality. However, a legitimate regulatory body for qualified yoga therapists is necessary for referrals by members of the medical professions.

#### ***5.8.5 Relationships:***

Relationship issues were examined from the points of view of the inner self, the family, the yoga community and the wider society. Relationships played a vital role for yoga practitioners' aptitude to achieve their goals. The relationship with oneself was treated by some participants as the true goal of yoga practice. They regarded that the true self as calm and peaceful, different from the everyday self. This idea of a 'divided self' was shared by Heideggerian phenomenology and Patanjali's classical yoga. The family relationships were found to be varied and dynamic. The relationship with the yoga community included the discrete nature of teaching in drop-in private classrooms, and the friendly nature of teacher-students relationships in the BWY classes, in comparison with the charismatic authority of guru school teaching. Lastly, the relationship with the modern society was analysed from the point of view of the change of teaching locations from Local Adult Education classes to private classes, and it was found that public demand and government policy changes affected the way yoga was taught.

#### ***5.8.6 Spirituality:***

The analysis of spirituality was broken down to various sub-categories, as the term carries ambiguous connotations, and the focus was given to discover how participants expressed it. Spirituality was divided into four categories:

- (1) What ‘spirituality’ was for secular BWY members.
- (2) How ‘spirituality’ was expressed: awareness of the inner self.
- (3) How ‘spirituality’ was achieved: the importance of Embodiment.
- (4) How they learned ‘spirituality’: the transmission of yoga knowledge.

Yoga’s spirituality was explained with yoga ‘philosophy’, i.e. learned from classic yoga texts. Some advanced yoga practitioners, ‘awareness’ and ‘inner self’ became important focus for gaining a calm mind. And for Hatha Yoga practitioners, spirituality arose from posture works, breathing practice and bodily awareness.

The yoga knowledge of spirituality was transmitted through the syllabus based classroom learning. In particular, its diploma teacher training course had significant influences. There was a major influence of Hittleman’s TV yoga programmes on the general public at large in the early 1970s, and it helped yoga to become popular. As a secular form, yoga seems to be more in demand and yoga classes needed more qualified teachers. The BWY started constructing teacher training courses based on the ideology of relaxed part-time education, as the BWY had a strong association with Local Adult Education councils which provided the sites of teaching. The secular nature of lineage for modern BWY members was compared with some guru orientated schools.

‘Spirituality’ emerged as a modern system of learning meaningful bodily practice, situated in adult education classrooms and increasingly in private places and gyms, and sometimes at various NHS sites.

## **5.9 Answers to the research questions**

The research question that I am trying to answer is:

“What is the nature of ‘the self’ modern yoga practitioners cultivate?”

This ontological question is further broken down into three sub-questions in order to discover the answer step-by-step.

- How does yoga practice influence yoga practitioners’ health and well-being?
- How does yoga practice influence the management of life crises for yoga practitioners’?
- How does yoga practice influence yoga practitioners’ sense of self?

The relationships between **yoga's influence on health and well-being** were examined using a deficiency model, an enhancement model, and from breathing practice. The majority of participants emphasized the importance of breath for the recovery of health and the enhancement of well-being. In order to maintain their good health, participants found that yoga skills provided them with a sense of 'empowerment' over their bodies. The ways in which practitioners used yoga practice to **manage their life crises** were also explored using an adapted version of Maslow's Hierarchy of Human Needs, with the conclusion that the long-term practitioners found that yoga practice helped them to mitigate/manage/solve different levels of life crises.

The BWY practitioners developed their yoga skills in stages, from novice to expert, and sometimes to super-expert. Along the way, they made a journey of self-discovery. As they progressed in learning practice skills, **their perception of the self** changed, and many took up the BWY's teacher training course. Upon qualifying as a teacher, all but one participant started searching for advanced yoga training. Then, after a long-term practice, some participants developed theories of life, reconciled themselves with their own lives and made peace with themselves.

Therefore, as a conclusion, the nature of 'the self' for Modern BWY members should be seen as **an embodied self, as opposed to the Cartesian cognitive self** (Descartes, 1912); it is a **progressive, secular and autodidactic development through yoga practice, and the experiential assimilation of yoga knowledge through syllabus based classroom learning.**

### 5.10 Summary

In this chapter, I analysed six emergent themes and answered research questions in a summarised form above. Using exemplars from the interview scripts, I tried to extract the essences of the lived experiences of yoga practitioners. On the whole, BWY practitioners were individualized, meaning-orientated, and standardized learners, which fitted the trend of the modern adult education system until recently. Yoga learning and teaching were moving towards more private and diverse locations. I also tried to illustrate the similarities and differences between the experiences of BWY practices and Guru-guided schools.



In the next chapter, I will discuss these answers further, and compare and contrast ‘the self’ of modern yoga practitioners with ‘the self’ in different models. I will also consider further research evaluation and implications.

## 6 DISCUSSION

### 6.1 Introduction

In this chapter, I will discuss the meaning of ‘the self’ in depth. After making a brief reappraisal of the main literature and the use of hermeneutic phenomenology in this study, I will firstly critically discuss the study findings from the previous chapter in the light of hermeneutic phenomenology. Secondly, I will further explore the nature of the self through analysis of the narratives of the lived experiences of the BWY practitioners. Thirdly, I will explore and discuss the contribution of my study for health in the field of complementary health, and its potential future applications to public health policy. Finally, I will reflect on my study's conclusions and make suggestions for future research.

To recapitulate, the research question that I am trying to answer is:

“What is the nature of ‘the self’ modern yoga practitioners cultivate?”

This ontological question is discussed in the three categories: yoga’s influence on (1) health and well-being; (2) management of life crises; (3) sense of self.

#### ***Reappraisal of the literature***

Polkinghorne (1989) states that phenomenological inquiry requires an ontological question – “what is the nature of experience?” instead of the epistemological ‘how’ question. In this sense, hermeneutic phenomenology seeks our own insight into ‘*what is our being and becoming*’ (van Manen, 1990). In this study, the research questions I set out to answer were related to ‘the self’ of BWY practitioners.

Smith and Boudreau (1986, p. 10) write about the purpose of yoga, “*Ultimately, yoga practice is the process of discovering who we are, and how and why we continue to exist.*”

In Chapter Two, I made a brief classification of the literature on yoga, yoga and the self, modernity and the self, the New Age Movement, and the BWY, out of a variety of relevant texts and published research papers. The aim of this literature search was to locate where and what the ‘Yoga Self’ was. In particular, for the BWY practitioners, the

New Age Movement played a crucial role in the development of ‘the self’, as the BWY was born and grew as a part of it. Another change took place in the 1990s, when yoga became an exponentially transnational global activity. The study of this new form of yoga is just beginning.

Modern Postural Yoga (MPY) is a modern construction which draws upon the diverse and extensive knowledge and methods of the vast yoga tradition, but also includes secular physical practice and scientific explanations in order to better fit contemporary lifestyles (De Michelis, 2004; Singleton and Byrnes, 2008; Newcombe, 2008). It is this eclectic and pragmatic use of modern yoga practice which characterizes most contemporary forms of yoga, in particular that of the BWY. These practices provide a meaningful development of a ‘sense of self’ throughout practitioners’ life trajectory. With these social conditions of yoga practice as its background, this study aimed to reveal the subjective ‘truth’ from the participants’ narratives of lived experiences, by using hermeneutic phenomenological methods. That is to say, in Dreyfus’s words (1994, p. vii) *“what it means to be an embodied human being that is self-interpreting and that takes a stand on being a particular finite human being in particular communities at a particular time in history.”*

It is crucial that when we attempt to understand the modern practice of yoga, we also take into consideration the fact that it reflects the current social climate. Yoga ideology and its various forms of practice have developed over a long time, but modern British practitioners relate to yoga theory in unique ways as I found in the previous chapter. Yoga’s enduring aim is considered to find the ‘true self’ through yoga practice, and to keep body and mind in harmony (Werner, 1987). It means to the western practitioners that they need to overcome the conventional dichotomy of Western Cartesian thinking, which is that the mind and the body are separate. For many participants in this study, yoga was a means for developing the wholeness of a healthier body, lifestyle, and an enduring ‘the self’.

I outlined the cultural background of my own understanding of yoga in Chapter 1, which included Buddhist tradition and phenomenology. In Chapter Two, I set out to illustrate the four models of self development which I found relevant to this study. The

first was Patanjali's Eight Limbs. In Classical Yoga, Patanjali mapped out the yogic spiritual journey in Yoga Sutra, which has been used as a point of reference by modern yoga practitioners (Singleton, 2008). This text is taught during the British Wheel of Yoga teacher-training course. However, the Eight Limbs are not exactly progressive steps for self development. The Eight Limbs are branches of yogic discipline that the practitioner follows in order to deepen their practice. The second model was Maslow's 'Hierarchy of the Human Needs', which has a close link with the New Age Movement, in which spiritual needs are placed at the top of the hierarchy. The third one was Dreyfus's 'Skill Acquisition' model based on Merleau-Ponty's idea of *intentional arc*. The fourth model was the Zen model of 'The Ten Oxherding Pictures', which I included as literature on yoga, phenomenology and Buddhism seemed to have similarities. One of the common ideas shared by these models is the understanding that the nature of 'the self' in lived experience is a process of life-long development.

### ***Summarizing the use of hermeneutic phenomenology in this study***

After considering two qualitative methodologies, ethnography and Biographical Narrative Interpretive Methods, I chose hermeneutic phenomenology as the methodology for this study as I needed to analyze the direct and subjective accounts of the lived experiences of the yoga practitioners. The theoretical backbone for understanding the self was provided by the ideas of Heidegger's *Dasein* (Being-in-the-world) and Merleau-Ponty's *embodiment*. Heideggerian hermeneutic phenomenology was chosen against Husserlian descriptive phenomenology. The latter places an emphasis on the process of 'bracketing' in order to extract 'pure consciousness' of the lived experience, and this process was not possible for this study. Since, I am, as the researcher, analysing narratives of bodily experiences of yoga practitioners by using my own experience to understand their feelings arising from the practicing body, it is impossible for me to stay neutral and detached from the process. In contrast, hermeneutic phenomenology takes an interpretive approach using the process of reflective analysis of language expressions, with the researcher's personal experience as a mirror, but aware of the influence and trying to minimize it.

Data was collected from the semi-structured in-depth interviews of fifteen yoga practitioners who were members of the BWY. The participants were chosen using the snow-balling and theoretical methods. The interview tapes were transcribed for analysis. After repeated reading and taking analytical steps, six overarching themes emerged, and those themes were analysed in Chapters Five.

## **6.2 Discussion of study findings in relation to research questions**

The findings from the interview materials indicate a number of characteristic features of how the participants perceive and practice Modern Postural Yoga everyday.

### **6.2.1 *Yoga and health***

The relationship between *yoga practice and practitioners' health and well-being* turned out to be a very important reason for practicing yoga. In the previous chapter, I devised three categories for this theme to understand the ways in which the participants explained their experience. The first one was the deficiency model: the body was in some way damaged and needed repairing (Vincent and Furnham, 1998). Yoga was a useful tool to empower the sufferers. The examples of ill-health mentioned by some participants were cancer, pain, and depression.

The second category was the enhancement model: the person could gain an improved quality of life with the help of yoga practice. The third one dealt with the yogic breath: the majority of participants indicated that this was the main tool to achieve both well-being and life enhancement.

I chose some suitable exemplars to analyse the participants' experiences of recovery from ill-health, the enhancement of the sense of well-being and their views on the importance of yogic breath.

When our body is functioning without problems, we are largely unselfconscious of it. As Leonerd (1994, p. 53) points out, "Our everyday lived experience in which the embodied self is taken for granted breaks down in illness." So, it is in this state of 'breakdown' that we develop insight into the taken-for-granted understanding of health:

the unity of self and healthy body. In the state of ill-health, one's suffering becomes one's embodied existence, not the mechanical object of observation.

This 'state of ill-health' in this study includes the ill-health of family members, psychological imbalance and existential discomfort as well, as these conditions also threaten one's taken-for-granted mode of being in the world.

However, I also considered the theme of health in relation to yoga practice in the previous chapter. The majority of the participants mentioned some sense of suffering at one time or other. For them, it seemed that suffering experiences had, to a certain degree, been transformed into a positive dimension of life through yoga practice.

In recent years, 'yoga and health' have been perceived as an inseparable holistic term, which has been propagated by the media, in books and various yoga advertisements in the press. For example, three participants mentioned Richard Hittleman's yoga programme on TV in the early 1970s as informative.

Health is also a very important reason to start yoga practice for many beginners as it is shown in figure 9. The majority of participants (12 people) in this study said that they had physical ill-health and/or mental stress when they started yoga. Newcombe (2008) found that after World War II, yoga was propagated as a health-promoting activity along with exercise, relaxation and public education. As a result, yoga has been accepted by the mainstream of society as a beneficial physical activity which helps the practitioner to be healthier and happier. This conspicuous social trend has been coined '*The Yogaization of the West*' (Campbell, 2007). Furthermore, many yoga schools have developed their own 'yoga therapy' courses. The BWY also currently runs health-related modules such as those for cancer, pregnancy and the elderly for qualified yoga teachers. The health aspect of yoga was evident in so far as six teacher participants had experience in teaching some kind of therapy classes, and two participants said they had started yoga at an NHS site.

From the data in the previous chapter, I selected teacher *B* as an example of cancer experience. She explained how she detected her own uterine cancer through her heightened visceral feeling that "*something is wrong with me*" while she was meditating. She also explained how her yoga practice enabled her to maintain her

strength and equanimity while she was waiting for the operation to remove it, and also, that the practice helped her to regain her bodily strength after the operation.

Regarding experiences of pain, participants with a variety of pains explained how they eliminated, contained and managed their suffering by practicing yoga. Learner *I* said she chose yoga instead of having an operation on her back, and it helped not only to eliminate her pain, but also to cope with work-related stress. Learner *L* narrated her experience with depression, and said “*Yoga is my saviour*”, which implies that practicing yoga enabled her to recover.

The common element in these cases is the **empowerment** obtained from learning yoga skills as these provided the participants with the tools necessary to manage their own bodies by themselves. When faced with health problems, three participants consciously sought out a way to help themselves with yoga techniques, and thus they felt that they were able to take control of their health problems with a sense of satisfaction and achievement.

The sense of enhancement through yoga practice mentioned by the participants had different connotations from the suffering experiences caused by ill-health. The participants used words like awareness, balance, esteem, calmness, relaxed, flexibility and so on, to describe their practice of yoga. These words were used to describe emotional and psychological states that they considered positive and desirable. Having practiced yoga for a while, the participants felt that their emotional and psychological states of being were elevated towards their ideal level. Although none of the participants used the term ‘well-being’ directly, they implied an improved state of being in life. Teacher *C* said it was for the “*feel-good factor*”, student teacher *M* used the phrase “*engage the mind and soul*”. Teacher *E* said “*from the mental aspect, it is a disciplined quiet space*”. The states that they described hold high value for them.

The importance of the breath was emphasised by almost all participants, and thus requires further investigation. The yogic breath to which they were referring was not the ordinary everyday breath. The subject of yogic breath-control has historically produced a colossal amount of literature, anecdotes, and scientific investigations over three millennia dating back to the Upanishad and the Bhagavad-Gita, and extending to modern molecular biology. In the Classic Yoga texts, although Patanjali did not write

the details of the pranayama (breath-control), he emphasized the importance of it for reaching the next stage of Samadhi. The expansion of pranayama and asana techniques had to wait for Hatha-Yoga-Pradipika with the development of Hatha Yoga (Sarukkai, 2002).

Merleau-Ponty (1964a, p. 167) writes of ‘*inspiration*’, and said that the word should be taken literally to mean inspiration and expiration of Being. Following this, Morley (2001, p. 76) comments on the yogic breath, “*In the context of āsana-prāṇāyāma we focus only on breathing rhythms; we take up what is involuntary and appropriate it into what Husserl (1977) would call ‘the sphere of ownness’*”. Morley (ibid.) suggests that the experience of pranayama points to a central aspect of Merleau-Ponty’s philosophy of the lived body, that is his explication of interiority and exteriority.

As the participant focuses his/her attention on the breath, on the sensation of the fresh air moving in and the warm air moving out, the body communicates with the inside of the body and the outside world. This concentration of the awareness of the breath establishes the link between what is being observed and who is observing, mediated by the bodily sensation of moving flesh, space and time. As the yogic experience of the awareness of the breath deepens with time, it becomes something more personal, meaningful and integrated into the construction of a sense of self, i.e. ‘the bodily self’ for the participant. For example, teacher *E* said,

*“Yoga practice really is the breath that is the basis of it all...it’s the relationship between the breath and the body we can’t separate, which we have separated, but we shouldn’t. We need to work as a unity.”*

In this sense, the breath works as a catalyst to reunite and rebuild a person as a whole. Campbell (2007) calls this process of reuniting the body and mind to be one of self-transformation, a characteristic of the New Age Movement. However, Campbell took a stance from social, cultural and religious points of view, that he did not consider the possibility of ‘the new self’ arising from bodily experiential feelings.

Morley (2001, p. 76) comments on the interaction between the breath and the inner-body,

*“Proprioception is inverted perception, the perception of the deep tissues of the body, of enclosed or encircled corporeal space.”*



One becomes conscious of this perception of the inner organs when our taken-for-granted bodily functions are impaired, or we become ill. But by focusing on the inner awareness of the breath, the participant develops an increased sense of proprioception without becoming ill or incapacitated. An example is Kripalu yoga's *flow sequence of postural movement* that teacher *N* described in the previous chapter.

Sarukkai (2002, p. 471) goes further,

*“Like the asanas, the practice of pranayama is also one that has an essential engagement with the inner body, both in the phenomenological aspect of this practice and in the beneficial effects on specific organs...I would reinterpret the yogic bodily practices...in terms of perception and the phenomenological experience of the ‘inside’. I believe that the idea of perception of the inner body complements Merleau-Ponty’s project regarding body and the world. The relationship of the inner body to the outer is the relationship of the body to the world.”*

The breath as the focal point for meditative practice is commonly used in many eastern traditions such as Buddhism, yoga, various martial arts and healing programmes. Austin (1998) explains that by attending to the breath, one is aware of the flow of thoughts in the mind. Then, over time, the flow ceases, and the awareness that is watching the mind flow disappears, as awareness itself becomes the content within awareness. An anonymous writer at Amaravati Buddhist Monastery (1988) explains that mindfulness in Vipassana (insight) meditation can be developed through attention to the breath. By attending to the breath and ceasing non-stop thinking, the practice can create space in the mind. Consequently, the mind becomes quieter and more peaceful.

Experiences of illness and recovery through yoga were popular themes in the narratives of the practitioners. In secular modern society in the latter half of the 20th century, yoga was propagated as a form of exercise which would provide therapeutic benefits (De Michelis, 2004; Newcomb, 2008; Campbell, 2007). The considerable amount of research concerning yoga has been in the field of medicine and other scientific disciplines (Parker and Parker, 2003). In the previous chapter, the exemplars were taken from participants’ narratives of suffering from pain and depression. Those participants shared the process of their feelings about their suffering being transformed into the positive experience of taking their life in their own hands. In modern society, the

implicit genesis of illness is an unlucky breakdown in the body that is conceived along mechanistic lines (Frank, 1995, p. 88), so that it can be fixed. Garrett (2001) regards yoga practice as a creative medium of ritual, and the ritual is used to change the embodied self, and the change to the self - both material and spiritual- comes from the repeated physical practices. Garrett (2001, p. 333) explains that the effects of yoga are not direct, but what she learned from it was a different attitude to pain and the body in general, ways to cope with pain and reduce its associated suffering. In this study, the narratives of illness recovery of participants indicated that yoga practice could mitigate the raw grief of loss, and helped to transform the pain of physical and emotional suffering. For instance, the loss of loved ones and divorce caused six participants distress and sometimes depression. For example, teacher *G* described her experience of the sudden loss of her husband which she was able to accept with calmness because of yoga.

Eliade (1969, p. 11) writes of yoga,

*“Soteriological techniques, as well as metaphysical doctrines, find their justification in this universal suffering, for they have no value save in the measure to which they free man from ‘pain’.”*

Eliade continues that every human experience engenders some kind of suffering, and that the pain could be regarded as the necessary condition for emancipation. In the Indian tradition, the existence of pain, a universal suffering, has a positive and stimulating value. Eliade asserts that recent Western philosophers analyzed the subject of the human condition, especially the temporality of the human being, thus making man a ‘*conditioned being*’ in time, although they neglected to explain how to ‘*de-condition*’ man. According to Eliade (1969), India has been preoccupied with the problem of ‘*the structure of the human condition*’ of the body, mind and spirituality, and how to solve it. He continues that yoga has been the one answer to this question, inclusive of the psychological, physical and ontological aspects, as yoga devised complicated models of the body, the mind and the worldview.

Following Eliade’s footsteps, and in accordance with a number of yoga practicing academics (e.g. Strauss, 2004; De Michelis, 2004; Nevrin, 2008). I postulate that learning yoga skills empowers the participant to help and mitigate their physical pain

and psychological suffering. Sometimes, the participants even gain physical strength and psychological independence, and they begin to think about spiritual well-being and make positive future plans.

### ***6.2.2 Yoga and management of life crises***

The relationship between *the management of life crises and yoga* was analysed using a slightly modified version of Maslow's Hierarchy of the Human Needs model. Since Maslow's model influenced the New Age Movement (Campbell, 2007; Puttick, 2004), and modern yoga developed on the back of the New Age Movement (Newcombe, 2008; De Michelis, 2004), they share a somewhat similar idea of self development.

Five long-term yoga participants described the ways in which yoga helped to carry them through their life crises. For the long-term practicing participants, life crises and yoga appeared to be a prominent feature of their narratives. It is significant that most yoga participants' careers had been punctuated and strengthened with life crises. When faced with life's challenges, the ways in which participants interpreted and applied yoga techniques to their situation were diverse and quite individualistic. Some of them said that they took up yoga, or came back to yoga when they needed it. It seemed that a life crisis could be the catalyst for some of the participants who found out that yoga was the way of managing life crises to make their life become coherent and meaningful.

Since personal development is a multifaceted term, there are a number of useful conceptual tools which may help to unpack and understand current yoga practice. In the previous chapter, I used a map of the Hierarchy of Human Needs in times of life crises, borrowed from Maslow's model, since '*crises*' implies a variety of challenges for each individual with multifarious solutions. At the lower level of the physical under-function level, postural yoga helped to relax and strengthen the participants. At the level of ill health, the needs for the participants seemed psychological as well as physical. At the relational needs level, the requirement for managing crises such as divorce and the loss of loved ones seemed to be of the enduring kind, involving looking into one's deeper inner resources. At the psychological level, problems such as dealing with stress at work or illness of a family member involved long-term social skills and robust health. At the spiritual level, the crises were often existential, less concrete and more difficult to

pinpoint, but appeared to be coming from within the depths of the psyche, which Heidegger (1962) calls the need of *Being Authenticity*. For instance, the feeling can be described as a loss of appetite for life, loss of meaning, being empty, a vacuous sense of purpose and so on. For the management of this crisis, the participants often turned to the meditative aspects of yoga practices. They said that these practices provided them with a sense of balance, equanimity and self-awareness. It is this spiritual practice that seemed to sustain some of the yoga participants who went through crises.

Regarding the participants' motivations to start and maintain yoga practice, almost everybody started from the lower needs, and developed towards a spiritual orientation. The majority of participants acknowledged achieving some degree of calmness and equanimity mainly through practicing Modern Postural Yoga (MPY), i.e. asana and pranayama practices.

At the first stage, the beginners attended to their physical needs by doing mostly postural practice, and relaxation in the class. Then they gradually improved their practice by learning breath control, and loosening their emotional knots. Some of the physical needs stemmed from chronic illnesses. Through learning yoga techniques, they learned to manage their own bodies. Other participants encountered crises triggered by changing relationships, such as the loss of loved ones, divorce, and children leaving home. Yoga practice seemed to soothe their grief by providing them with time out and space for themselves. Other participants started, or continued, going to a yoga class because they had some degree of psychological need, for example because of encountering stressful situations at work or continuing difficulties at home.

Singleton (2005) has also asserted yogic relaxation to be therapeutic in these circumstances. William James (1902, p. 110) commented that salvation could be possible through relaxation. However, as well as relaxation, participants stressed the power of breathing practice. Long-term participants tended to mention the importance of meditation practice. The spiritual need seemed to arise when the participants became aware of their inner self. For some, the transformative nature of yoga practice became their 'rite of passage' so that they could be a 'new self/person'. For example, the peak-experience of Chakra Opening was only mentioned by teacher N. She was the only person who had a guru to guide her practice. She enthusiastically described the

occasions in which she felt ecstatic joy, and ensuing life change. However, concerning the peak experience, Maslow (1970) later admits that some self-actualizers are non-peakers (*sic*), and those non-peakers are the really influential social workers and world-betterers (*sic*). Maslow also recognizes that the need for self-actualization does not necessarily develop when the lower needs are fulfilled (Maslow, 1970). Indeed, the majority of the participants did not mention wanting to strive for samadhi or enlightenment, but rather to use yoga techniques that were conducive to their current lifestyle in order to be more holistic, healthy, loving, and wholesome. Maslow originally believed that the after-effects of peak experiences should lead individuals to be more altruistic. However, for most participants, they did not want to be a self-actualizer but only to be reflexive and aware of oneself and others' needs.

As teacher *E* said, yoga techniques provided coping strategies for life crises for anyone. For teacher *A*, yoga had become a way of life to sustain her faith in her on-going challenging life. It seems that yoga is useful to the participants by strengthening the body and by enhancing a positive psychological orientation and calmer emotional propensities; yoga improves interactions and relationships with others as a result, bringing them an emotionally stable life and providing them with spirituality. It was a kind of self-actualization in everyday life through yoga practice. As Campbell (2007, p. 131) says “*a direct consequence of spiritual advancement, bringing not just health, but a new sense of wholeness and indeed happiness.*”

### ***6.2.3 Yoga and sense of self***

The relationship between ***Yoga practice and development of yoga practitioners' sense of self*** is an important theme for this study, as I believe that the key to understanding the nature of the self for the participants is its dynamic transformative process.

Heelas (1996) and Campbell (2007) assert that modern society encourages the creation of a ‘new self’ and the celebration of ‘the inner self’. Against the backdrop of yoga history, I am now able to understand the reasons why ‘the modern self’ of yoga in their narratives was so psychologized, embodied, spiritual but secular, and above all, eclectic. In the previous chapter, I built a model that was very loosely based on the *Skill Acquisition model* by Dreyfus (1986). Dreyfus originally founded this model on the

concept of Merleau-Ponty's *intentional arc*. His model sets five stages from novice to expert. As Dreyfus writes, we require new skills in the wider context with other people, and human understanding is a skill akin to knowing how to find one's way about in the world. Instead of his Five stages, I highlighted **Seven stages** in this study from novice to super-expert. Through this model, I have identified how the participants underwent a passage of self-discovery as they learned yoga practice skills.

To summarise briefly, with an increased level of skills acquired, the participants began to want to develop their inner self through yoga rather than through further physical skills. After becoming experts, they wanted to train in related skill areas such as remedial yoga, psychic development, or guru-guided yoga. Then, practicing deeper/more specialized yoga over the years, they grew reflective and started defining the meaning of their life and what yoga meant to them. Among the participants, three decided to become Diploma Course Tutors (DCT) to teach the next generation of teachers and disseminate their knowledge to the wider society.

Dreyfus says that competent performance is rational; proficiency is transitional; experts act arationally (*sic.*)(1986, p. 36). In other words, a novice firstly follows the manual; then he (*sic.*) himself becomes an example, then lastly, he performs the skill with intuition and spirit rather than by following rulebooks. For the participants, stages 4-6 were where they found their own path through trial and error, with some of the participants then finally reaching a stage where they could make peace with their life and feel happy. At stage 7, three of the participants consciously made a decision to join the BWY lineage system by becoming DCTs, and disseminate their knowledge and experience to the wider audience as super-experts.

The transformation of the 'sense of self' which the participants developed along their life course was qualitatively discernible.

In this section, I will use **teacher B's narrative story as a paradigm case** to illustrate the personal journey of a yoga practitioner and their self-development.

*B* started yoga practice in 1974, **as a novice**, when yoga was beginning to be taught at a Local Adult Education class, and she explained that she knew nothing about it.

*“I was still home with the children and it was something to do. I started because I didn’t know what yoga was... So when I saw yoga, I thought ‘I don’t know what that is, I’m going to go and find out.’”*

The recreation orientated courses at LAE then were attended by mainly white middle class women like *B*. *B* found **yoga enjoyable and strengthening**.

*“And so I found actually yoga was something I could do, it wasn’t competitive, and I’m not very competitive so I never had to compete with anybody in yoga class, and I found I could do it and I enjoyed it and I found I got more strong, more supple. So I did that really for quite a long time,”*

Then *B* went on to study for a teacher-training diploma course to become **an expert** so that she could use her experience of yoga.

*“...the teaching, I think it’s a hard thing to do, so I thought it would be good for me to teach something, and that’s when I decided I’d do yoga teaching because I’d done the yoga and I had lots of years by then of experience.”*

*B* qualified as a yoga teacher in 1992, and has been teaching ever since with pride. In the 1990s, the yoga boom was about to happen and the demand for qualified yoga teachers was high. **Yoga teaching in AE classes was relaxed and friendly**. The BWY teaching was **secular** and its practice was mainly **stretch, basic breathing practice and relaxation**.

*“Well straight away I started my own class because before I qualified to get practice I had my own class, which I’m still doing that class. And I still have people that have come for years and years. I’ve got one lady that’s been coming ever since 1992 and she’s still coming to my class.”*

*B* then went on to practice **psychic development**. *B* wanted to deepen her inner self knowledge. Hatha yoga teaches that there are 7 energy centres (chakras) in the human body along the spine.

*“... the psychic development is working with the chakras, so it’s a big link with yoga. You work with the chakras, the 7 main chakras, and bring energy from the base, magnetic energy up, and spiritual energy down, and you’re working with...you work to push energy through the chakras so you bring energy up and down...”*

Then her psychic inner voice told her to **move on to counselling** to understand her suffering, and to take control of the pain. So, she took a positive step forward to a different learning.

*“That was quite amazing, and I loved that period, ...it was psychically telling me to move to a different area... I had a bad neck because of my dental work, and I’m always struggling with my neck, and, so I was sitting meditating and I’m asking ‘What can I do? Is there anything else I can do to help my neck?’ And the words again came, and the words said ‘Do counselling, move away from dentistry because that’s what’s hurting my neck.’ ”*

B loved counselling and found it **easy to relate to other people**. She felt it as a positive reward.

*“And that was 1995, I started to do the counselling. And I was qualified in 1999 and I’ve been counselling ever since, and I love the counselling, again I really feel it’s something I’m quite good at. I’m used to people, and I’m very comfortable. I think it’s very useful to know how to respond, even in the dental world when the patients come in with bereavement or something, I feel that the counselling has helped me to deal better with them.”*

B then was asked to learn to be a mediator as an extension of her **skill improvement**. B became willing to learn new skills and expand her work to a new area of conflict solving.

*“And then the next thing I’ve just added, I do some work for a mother/daughter agency... they also do this mediation, and she said to me ‘know you like doing different things, would you like to do mediation. It pays well.’ So I thought ‘Oh, ok then.’ So I’m trained now as a mediator and what the mediation is very akin to the counselling ...”*

Meanwhile she had **cancer** of the uterus. She explained that her yoga practice sharpened her visceral sensitivity, but the medical response at a hospital was slow coming.

*“I think I presented in about March and I didn’t actually get the operation for 10 months...in fact it was when I did yoga and meditation that I realized I had a problem. I had, it was in the womb, and I had a mucus discharge, and that’s when I presented because I said this isn’t normal. But it was when, I only had pain really, not even pain but a discomfort, when I meditated, it’s like when I got down to that very still level did I realize there was something going on in my body. ”*



While she was waiting her operation, she felt **two selves inside her**: the calm self was detached from the other self who was suffering. This detached self from one's inner turmoil has in common with Heidegger's (1962) *clearing* and the sense withdrawal stage of yoga's meditation (described in chapter 2).

*"...the strange thing really was when I was, before I had my operation and in that time while I was waiting, when I knew that I was going to have it done, it was like I was outside myself looking in, and this was really quite weird because I was, like it wasn't me. This is my best friend who's got a problem but it wasn't me, and I was like on the ceiling looking down. I was outside myself."*

After the operation, *B* used her knowledge of **yoga technique as an empowering tool** to regain her strength again. In Heidegger's (1962) description, such a technique is a 'ready-at-hand' tool to be used for a purpose as 'equipment totality'.

*"...after the operation, ...I mean it was painful underneath and I realized then that I've got to work these muscles so, you know, the fact that **I was a yoga teacher and I knew I'd got to work my muscles**. And then things like, just getting the muscles back, I found the lying twist was quite a good one, so I did make a special effort when I was recovering to lie on the floor and do some strengthening sit-ups. I think it just, I think yoga just gives you a calmness, about things, like you cope better somehow and, you're going through these things but its ok, just feel that, it just gives you. In the end I just feel I'm living in a very calm place and things can be quite manic, but I'm still in my centre, I feel very cantered and like it can't throw me. So it gives me a strength, **I feel I've got this inner strength now that takes me through.**"*

*B* evaluated her life as she was approaching her retirement in the next few years, as arriving at the point where **she felt free, happy and independent**.

*"I'm very happy because I work it out and I get the class to tell what they like, what they want to do, I think the counselling freed me with my yoga because before the counselling I felt I had to know everything, and when I did the counselling I realized I didn't have to know and that was very freeing for me,... I didn't have to be the expert anymore, I'm not the expert, I know a bit but, that really was quite freeing..."*

To summarise key points in her narrative:

**(1) The developmental self:** *B* described her life as a process of self-discovery. *B* started enjoying the physical benefits of yoga as a learner, then she studied to be a yoga

teacher. Her own yoga practice took her to psychic development, and counselling to mediation.

**(2) Care:** She enjoyed *teaching and bonding* with students, and found easy to relate to other people.

**(3) Yoga as a tool for Empowerment:** When she wanted to cope with neck pain, and post-operational recovery, she consciously used yoga techniques as the tool to manage her body and maintain strength.

**(4) Attending one's bodily senses:** She also deepened her insight into her own self through yoga practice. She first detected the new growth in her uterus when she was meditating. While her visceral sensory perception was heightened by *attending the inner bodily senses*, she detected an existentially threatening bodily phenomenon, the inner anomaly.

**(5) The divided selves:** She also experienced a sense of the divided self, and it functioned as a coping mechanism for an ontological crisis. For *B*, it was not a schizophrenic, but a healing process. The idea of two divided selves has been a central theme of the long history of Yoga (Burley, 2008; Morley, 2001). The sacred eternal self, sometimes called Brahman or the ultimate Self, and the profane this-worldly self, are to be sublimated and united (Eliade, 1969). This theme runs through Classical Yoga, Hatha Yoga, and Modern Yoga. In Heidegger's phenomenology, the terms *authentic self* and *inauthentic self* explain similar ideas. Heidegger (1962) called it Dasein, the authentic Being, and differentiated it from 'das Man', the subject of daily life.

**(6) Encountering an ontological crisis** is also an opportunity to go through a transformation. While *B* appeared calm and happy, she devised to dissociate herself as the sick self, and the detached self who was not emotionally involved in the suffering. Her suffering from cancer presented her with an opportunity to get to know her hidden, calm authentic self. This seems not to be an isolated experience in managing the crises in life for a yoga practitioner as teacher *A* had a similar story. Patanjali's Yoga Sutra, the classical yoga text, emphasises that the True Self resurfaces when one becomes calm (Wicher, 1999; Feuerstein, 1991). *B* adopted this stance, and explained the development of the inner self with this ideal.

**(7) Resolution:** It is the stage when the participant felt '*my life is ok as it is*'.

Towards the end of his life, Heidegger calls it *Gelassenheit*, ‘release’ or ‘let things be’ (Watts, 2001), Merleau-Ponty terms it ‘freedom’, and Maslow explains it as ‘plateau experience’ (refer to chapter 2).

Considering the relationship between learning yoga skills and the process of self-development, Dreyfus (1986) explains that he found from experiments that true experts follow their own intuition rather than rationally accepting text or rule books.

Teacher *B* said that she felt that she had an inner teacher and that she should follow it. After 30 years of practicing yoga, she evaluated that she was at peace with herself and felt happy. Dreyfus (1986) asserts that our basic human understanding is knowing *how* rather than knowing facts and rules.

However, Dreyfus’s model is based on a practical skill like computing, and the model only provides for development up to ‘expert’ stage, whereas, yoga starts from learning practical techniques to developing a spiritual/ontological aspect of inner self.

By acquiring and becoming familiar with yoga techniques, yoga becomes a part of one’s life skills, which include physical techniques, meditational practices, and ontological yoga ideologies. In a similar manner, Heidegger (1962) talks about the usefulness of tools as *equipment totality* in order to find one’s place in the world. Yoga practice becomes familiar, available and usable tools to the practitioner over the years.

Although yoga consists of complex skills which are said to aim at gaining a higher state of spirituality, most yoga skills actually taught in a classroom are practical and relaxing for the practitioners. It also enabled them to be emotionally independent by gaining equanimity. It is this sense of freedom that *B* evaluated to be her achievement.

However, there were other participants who were taking a different life path, or at a different stage in life. For instance, teacher *C* went back to her full-time family business after a few years of teaching yoga. Learner *H* did not wish to become a teacher, but became a member of both the local and national BWY committees. He simply wished to make a contribution to the BWY in some way. Learner *K* was a novice, and appreciated only the physical benefits. Learner *K* was trying to enter a diploma teacher training

course. Student-teacher *M* was already planning a new life with yoga teaching. Learners *I* and *L* were happy to remain learners for the time being.

As it was described by teacher-participants, a majority of learners in their classes were happy to be just learners, attending a yoga class once or twice a week for many years. The way in which most BWY classes were taught in a yoga classroom was orientated towards health and relaxed well-being, and not every practitioner wished to pursue advanced stages.

#### ***6.2.4 The nature of the self***

This thesis aims at finding an answer to the main research question “*what is the nature of ‘the self’ modern yoga practitioners cultivate?*” In order to consider the nature of ‘the self’ in relation to modern yoga practice, my analysis of the self based on phenomenological understanding is going to be divided into two categories: the self within and the self-in-the-world.

##### ***The genesis of the self***

Merleau-Ponty (1962) argues that the lived body is the locus of experience in two ways: one to feel the inside body and one to present to the outer world as a person. For Heidegger (1962), being with others is the essential nature of Dasein.

Thus, the nature of ‘the self’ for modern yoga practitioners is discussed in two areas. The ‘first self’ comes from deep within the body, the subjective feeling of the lived experience of embodiment. The ‘second self’ is a social construction, and it seems to be founded on the cultural practice of modernity. Therefore, I will consider ‘the self’ in relation to these two dimensions: the embodied self and the social self.

(1) The self within: embodiment.

Our understanding of ‘the self’ for yoga practitioners is the one acquired through the lived-experience of yoga practice. The consideration of the self is firstly focused on the various aspects of embodiment.

(2) The self-in-the-world: the dimension of the social self with others.

The normative modern yoga practice is so-called Modern Postural Yoga (MPY) (De Michelis, 2004; Nervin, 2008, Singleton, 2005; Newcombe, 2008). However, the idea of ‘the self’ for the practitioners is far from being homogenous or concrete as ‘the self’ is always situated in the various dimensions of its social phenomena.

#### **6.2.4.1 *The embodied self***

The ultimate purpose of yoga practice was said to uncover ‘who I am’: in other words, ‘the ultimate Self’ (Eliade, 1969; Feuerstein, 1980; Shearer, 1982).

Yoga and phenomenology appear to share some common features, in the sense that the transformation comes from within, the self-awareness of being, the perception of inner self, and the sense of freedom through the bodily awareness of the inner self although models of self-development to realize ‘the self’ in the East and the West have come from different origins. However, the difficulties of studying the so-called ‘embodied mind’ are emphasized by Clarke (1997). For example, when teacher *E* described that moving a foot or a certain way of breathing affected her emotional state, other people could only understand what she meant by reflecting through their own experiences. Gallagher (1998) explains that the pre-noetic body of Merleau-Ponty is different from Husserlian consciousness, and its bodily schema is *inaccessible* through phenomenological introspection. He draws conclusions from recent physiological research, expressing that some bodily practices affect motility and that the postural schema has an effect on the emotive evaluation of one’s own body image. Gallagher asserts that embodied mind research must be worked out conceptually with the help of the empirical sciences, which is in line with Merleau-Ponty’s (1962) embodied model. Nervin (2008) also argues that the important aspect of contemporary yoga practice is learning to feel the body move and to move the body differently. She asserts that by focusing and attending, the awareness of the practitioner learns to intensify the experience of proprioception in general and kinaesthesia in particular. In addition, six participants mentioned that relaxation played an important part for their emotional release, and that relaxation is another important part of yoga practice. Therefore, I divide the content of embodiment into two categories: proprioception and relaxation.

### ***Proprioception***

The models of bodily awareness have been increasingly discussed in recent research. In neurophysiology, Beatty (1995) explains that proprioception is the sense of bodily position and movement. Proprioceptive sensations enable us with skilled and dexterous movement. Proprioception arises from somatosensory receptors located in the joints and the skeletal muscles. O'Shaughnessy (1998) explains that proprioception is a mode of feeling accompanying the experience of bodily movement. Martin (1998) mentions that bodily awareness is related to a sense of ownership. Martin says that bodily sensations, kinaesthesia, proprioception, and the vestibular sense together amount to an awareness of one's body as one's own. Brewer (1998) explores the link between bodily awareness and the self. Brewer says that bodily awareness is intrinsically spatial, as a physically extended body in the spatial world. Thus experienced bodily ownership based on bodily sensations is awareness of oneself as extended in space, where we recognize the inseparability of the mental and the physical in bodily awareness. Cassam (1998) discusses the deep connection between proprioception and appropriation. He argues that awareness of bodily sensation by introspection is not enough, and requires proprioceptive awareness of the position of the limbs. Thus awareness of oneself becomes the awareness of the bodily self.

In short, the bodily awareness for yoga participants is founded on the perception of the bodily movement, sensory feelings, bodily ownership and control, as well as spatial understanding of the surrounding world. Proprioceptive sensations play a vital part to maintain a healthy bodily awareness of the self.

Proprioception in yoga practice is discussed by Singleton (2005). He asserts that one of the functions of proprioception is for relaxation in modern yoga through asana, pranayama and visualization. Morley (2001) argues that proprioception is inverted perception, and that is sited in the deep tissues of the body and fills the enclosed corporeal space. Although the sense of proprioception is normally hidden from our consciousness, when we fall ill, our perception turns inwards towards the cause of unpleasant sensations such as pain, instead of attending to the outside world. The yogic breathing practice provides the opportunity to attend to inner feelings of proprioception without suffering from illness. While moving the body in postures and attending conscious breathing, the practitioner develops an awareness of the inverted sense of

muscles, joints, and various organs of the body. This awareness of the internal moving and living body gives the practitioners a sense of ownership of their own body. With long-term practice, the practitioners gradually shift their self-identification from the cognitive ‘ego’ self to the more bodily self. Merleau-Ponty calls this bodily sense of self ‘zero point’ (1962), which precludes cognitive pre-judgment.

Thus the ‘zero-point’ of the self arises from the deep-seated bodily sense of the self, i.e. proprioception. It is concerned with a sense of ownership and mastery, an ability to use it for purpose. Nevrin (2008) asserts that attending body movement and one’s own proprioception through yoga practice involve a heightened sensitivity of the body and a heightened richness of sensory experience.

With the elevated level of awareness of the body, teacher *E* explained that body movement and spirituality were inseparable in yoga practice. Teacher *B* also became aware of the early stage of cancer within her body. Nevrin (2008) says that even novice practitioners will experience these changes in bodily sensitivity as being highly positive and transformative. Moreover, Nevrin (ibid.) argues that kinaesthesia with body movement is a nonverbal experience, and some practitioners appreciate the opportunity to experience bodily self-identity through heightened forms of multi-sensory awareness.

It is often liberating for the practitioners to experience a ‘new’ bodily self, because our attention in everyday life is directed to certain objects or certain actions, as *das Man* (Heidegger, 1962), and the attention towards one’s own bodily, sensory, and emotional experiences are forgotten.

Among the participants, teacher *C* noted the three occasions on which she cried during yoga classes. Tutor *D* likened her experience of being touched by the teacher while she meditated to a thunderbolt. Teacher *N* described the occasions on which she felt ecstatic while chanting. In particular, *N* explained that her yoga school, Kripalu, emphasized the use of ‘flow’ sequences of posture movements, which tended to induce a different state of consciousness from the conventional one (Csikszentmihalyi, 1992).

When the practitioner attends the body movement and kinetic sensory experience, they leave behind the inauthentic everyday self-identity which is stressed and causes anxiety and difficulty in life. Thus yoga’s bodily practice can provide the practitioner with an opportunity to realize the *authentic self* (Heidegger, 1962). Watts (2001) explains that,

for Heidegger, the experience of anxiety can be a potentially ‘enlightening’ event. When this event occurs, the mood of the practitioner is characterized by an unambiguous, intense and overwhelming sensation that disrupts our normal sense of existence, and the practitioner experiences the naked ‘bodily’ truth about themselves and the world, by stripping away all our familiar ways of perceiving things. The catalyst for this breakthrough is the intense experience of proprioception in yoga, as a ‘zero point’ (Merleau-Ponty, 1962) to experience the world as being ‘alive’.

### ***Relaxation***

There were six participants who stressed that they experienced a deep release with relaxation after posture and breathing practice. This is why, in tandem with modern postural practice, relaxation is considered to be very important by the participants.

Singleton (2005) explores the relationship between yoga relaxation and the role of proprioception. He asserts that the principles of muscular extension as a preparation for relaxation were well established in the West in the 1950s – 1960s, before yoga’s reinvention as a stretching exercise. For instance, Jacobson (1938; 1977) explains the medical benefits of progressive relaxation using physical exercises. Jacobson (1977) argues that after progressive muscular exercise, the nerve tension in the body and high emotions tend to subside as one relaxes.

When modern yoga was packaged as a physical project aiming for the improvement of health and well-being, relaxation time was an important part to counter stressful modern living (Newcombe, 2008; De Michelis, 2008; Wood, 1959). The BWY’s foundation course indicates some elements of six different yoga relaxation techniques in the syllabus (Singleton, 2005). The importance of relaxation is illustrated in the way the BWY guides its teaching members to plan lessons. On their web-site (2008), the BWY explains,

*“In a typical class, 10-20 minutes is usually given to relaxation, at the beginning and/or the end. Most students lie in ‘savasana’ (lying on your back). Various relaxation methods are taught ranging from physical relaxation and simple breathing exercises to visualization (imaging a scene) and techniques such as ‘autogenic suggestion’.”*



For the BWY yoga class, relaxation is regarded as having an integral role (BWY website, 2008). There are several hypotheses to explain why relaxation plays such an important role in modern yoga practice. Nevrin (2008) argues that the effect of attending to body movement and the phase of relaxation at the end can have a spiritual nature. She points out that practicing yoga involves a range of emotionality through identification of belonging; through the sharing of experiences with others, and through creating an imaginative environment using music and incense. Singleton (2005) asserts that the ideological exchange between Indian gurus such as Vivekananda and psychologist William James at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century paved the way for the modern yogic relaxation we know today as ‘spiritual relaxation’. Singleton (2005) explains its practical merits in so far as ‘yoga relaxation’ puts the practitioners in harmony with the world as well as furnishes them with a complete existential survival kit.

A number of participants explained that they started yoga practice because they suffered stress-related life events, and it seemed that yoga relaxation helped them as a self-healing mechanism in a safe yogic environment, supported and comforted by the teacher and other members. When a person is stressed, a tense mind creates chaos, the body becomes tight, breathing becomes shallower, and a distressed person creates a dysfunctional world (Shapiro, 1990; Jacobson, 1977). Jacobson (1938) who originally propagated the merits of relaxation, instigated the idea that relaxation is the harmonious state of emotions, nervous systems and muscular conditions. Other yoga writer-practitioners endorsed his view on yoga relaxation, which helped it to become more popular (e.g. Shapiro, 1990; Hewitt, 1982).

By focusing on the body and releasing the tension from the body, the troubled mind is, as Merleau-Ponty (1962) describes, brought ‘down to earth’ by surrendering the body to relaxation. William James (1902, p. 110) coined this phenomenon ‘the salvation through self despair, the dying to be truly born’ and ‘salvation through relaxation’.

For instance, teacher *C* and teacher *N* described the experiences of dramatic emotional release during relaxation in a class. Nine others explained that the reasons they continued yoga practice were initially stress reduction through postural yoga and relaxation. The state of being in relaxation, if repeated often enough, may become a part

of practitioners' habitual state over time, as the participants find 'peace', 'equanimity', 'balance' to be important keywords for themselves.

Thus, the nature of 'the self' modern yoga practitioners cultivate was found to be a deeply embodied sense of self, the self founded on the sense of unity which comes from proprioception and a relaxed state of the bodily harmonious self.

### ***The critical appraisal of the embodied self in the modern society***

I described above how the subjective sense of the embodied self arises from yoga practice. However, Nerven (2008, p. 132) points out that socially constructed sense of embodiment tends to be ignored in the past literature. Although attending to the perception of body movements sensitizes the awareness of the individual, bodily awareness and the consequent positive emotional states do not materialize naturally, and has to be learned through some media and/or sharing practice with others. In order to transform a person, there is a need for socially and culturally shared processes (Turner, 1969; Csordas, 1994). The shared performance of yoga practice and rhetoric provide the necessary framework for spiritual insight.

For BWY practitioners, a physically-aroused sense of wellness becomes individualized spirituality, as the teacher does not provide a religious framework. In this manner, yoga practitioners often talk about the body as a sacred temple (Naitou, 1991). Thus, instead of asceticism, BWY practitioners regard yoga practice as enjoyment. Heelas and Woodhead (2005) assert that subjective life spirituality tends to fare best in a holistic milieu which pays most attention to the cultivation of unique subjectivities. They term this tendency the '*subjective turn*'. The subjective turn only comes about because of relations and connectedness with others, such as families, classmates, and teachers. Heidegger (1962) states that our Being is always with others, and it depends on *care* for each other. For Heidegger, Being-in-the-world with others is an essential part of his theory, and Merleau-Ponty translated this idea as '*être-au-monde*'. Yoga as a simple embodied practice is an incomplete understanding. The idea of *inside and outside* of Merleau-Ponty (1962) is not only the internal body and the external body, but *myself* is inside the body while the outside body presents myself to the world to reach out for other people.

O'Shaughnessy (199, p. 197) explains from a psychologist's point of view that proprioception is an immediate mode of feeling, and an accompanying feeling is always present. But he warns that the proprioceptive perceptive feeling of the body is short-term and we must cultivate a long term body image by rediscovering a fundamental deeper instinct through proprioception. For example, teacher *B* discovered her cancer through her heightened visceral sense when she meditated. Through her recovery from cancer, she used yoga skills to manage her body and gain the strength psychologically and physically. She concluded that she became happy and relaxed with her life, and that she wanted to share her happiness with her students in the class.

Csordas (1983) believes that the rhetoric plays an important part in a bodily transformative process. When a yoga practice session is understood as a ritual process (De Michelis, 2004), the performance of the practice becomes empowering, and the practice routine and discussion become an invocation for sacred and hidden powers within the bodily self. For instance, teacher *N* narrated her experience of chanting during her initiation ceremony, and how affected she was when she felt her chakra opening. It was such a life changing experience that she needed a long and hard readjustment period to go back to a normal life.

It seems that what mattered most for each practicing individual was to make sense of how they felt about their mode of existence and its meaningfulness. The *modus operandi* for the yoga practitioner was manifest through yoga practice and the feeling arising through the body and through shared experience. I believe that the subjective experience of yoga practitioners' feelings and private thoughts have not been properly investigated before, despite the fact that yoga has become such a social phenomenon.

I have looked at the nature of the making of embodied self through yoga practice. I now turn to exploring the social background of modern yoga practice for BWY members, as Modern Postural Yoga is a syncretic creation born out of the Western and the Eastern traditions. Consequently the ways they practice, feel, and construct meaning are unique to modern society.

#### **6.2.4.2 The social self**

Yoga practitioners learn yoga skills through authoritative persons: teachers and gurus, and other media, such as TV programmes and textbooks. The way of yoga practice must be learned within social relationships with others. As a result, the notion of relationship has an important significance concerning ‘the self’ in modern yoga. The development of the social self for yoga practitioners is especially important, since they learn yoga skills from others, they practice yoga with others, and emotional support and friendships are shared with others within yoga communities. In this section, various aspects of the social characteristics for Modern Postural Yoga practice are considered.

#### ***Language in the constructed yoga ideology***

By looking at the range of vocabulary of each participant, and comparing the differences between them, I identified the characteristic features of modern yoga, with slightly different expressions among individuals. These narratives loosely fit under the category of the New Age ideology of ‘the self’ postulated by Heelas (1996) and Campbell (2007).

In the interview narratives, the body, mind, emotion, health, and spirituality, were frequently used keywords. When explaining their yoga practices, particularly breathing practice, participants used words such as ‘awareness’, ‘feeling’, and ‘peaceful,’ indicating that meaningfulness was arising out of shared reflexive expression. The participants also described the sense of self as ‘good’, ‘being comfortable’, ‘feeling peaceful’, ‘relaxed’, and ‘sharing’.

Nevrin (2008, p. 132) claims that “*Through various social interactions, the practitioner might be encouraged to ‘be oneself’ ...To relax into an emotionally supportive atmosphere may enable the person to more openly express emotion and to feel ‘at home’ with others*”.

In fact, all participants talked about their yoga practice as involving others, and not in isolation. The shared meaning construction of yoga values such as ‘being true to myself’, were shown by the repetition of words and phrases such as ‘faith’, ‘at peace with myself’, ‘way of being’ and ‘profound experience’.

The four stages of yoga meditation in Patanjali's Yoga Sutra, to which the participants often referred, teach how to develop reflexivity or insight into one's own psyche. Singleton (2008) and Burley (2008) assert that modern yoga practitioners draw from the ideology of Classical Yoga, use some secularized Hatha Yoga techniques, and practice innovated modern yoga. However, modern yoga comes in diverse forms, each one with its own characteristics and lineage. This combination of innovation in modern yoga practice and underlying ideology has been transmitted through the modern lineages of the particular schools.

There have been various anthropological and sociological studies into the modern lineages of guru-guided yoga schools, particularly in the past 10 years (Strauss, 2005; Alter, 2004; Coney, 1996; De Michelis, 2004; Smith, 2008). Smith (2008), for example, cites such expression as '*with heat (tapas) even iron will bend*' in Ashtanga Yoga ashram, and says that their language was based on shared virtue of discipline and authority.

On the other hand, the BWY has taken and established secular methods of transmission of yoga knowledge without its own organizational gurus or charismatic leaders. I will next explore the aspects of modern yoga's lineage in the BWY.

### ***The Teacher-student relationship in the BWY lineage***

One aspect of yoga practice concerning the relationship of practitioners with the teacher in BWY communities is conspicuously different from guru-guided schools. Guru-guided schools are led by a guru as the charismatic leader (Weber, 1991, original work published in 1948), and have established 'forms of control and asceticism central to that tradition' through discipline and authority (Smith, 2008). In their place, the BWY established a democratized authority. According to their quarterly journal *Spectrum*, they have an annually elected chairman, a paid business manager, various member-sanctioned board members, various committee officers and volunteers to regulate finances, market the yoga goods, run day-to-day office, answer enquiries, and organize various yoga courses and events. Instead of charismatic figures, there are patrons who give advice to the committee and give a talk at the Annual Congress Meeting without imposing their authority. The organization is run with membership fees, income from

courses and event fees, and from selling yoga goods. All income and expenditure are accounted, audited, and made public. There are also eleven regions which are run as mini versions of this model. These organizational characteristics influence the self-perception of its members.

Ex-tutor *O* described how terrifying one Iyengar teacher was, but also how satisfying she was at the same time. Smith (2008, p. 140) explains that students are pushed to perform increasingly harder postures, the Ashtanga Yoga guru Pattabhi Jois teaches to burn out impurities (*tapas*) to gain strength and purity of the body, and transformation of the self.

Compared with these guru schools, it is apparent that yoga classes and training events of the BWY show the absence of authoritative figures. The diploma course syllabus suggests that teacher-trainees are taught to explain benefits, cautions and contraindications of a planned posture, but the decision of how to perform the posture is ultimately left to the learner themselves. The session is usually followed by a discussion towards the end.

Nine participants have enjoyed long standing friend-like yoga teacher-student relationships. However, three teachers ran yoga classes in gyms and sports centres, and sometimes taught big groups. Two veteran teachers regularly organized workshops and courses with a large number of attendees. These events were organized for mass participation, and the relationships between teacher and students were impersonal.

One participant, teacher *E*, talked about how she enjoyed a mother-daughter-like relationship with her teacher for a long time. Three participants preferred going to different teachers to learn different ways of practicing yoga from different schools. On the whole, teacher-student relationships were usually friendly, trusting and mostly personal in the BWY classes. However, yoga classes organized in big sport halls and gymnasiums catered for a large number of students, and fostered less intimate feelings and less commitment, as teacher *N* complained.

On the other hand, the guru-chela (Master-disciple) relationships are described differently by many studies. When one meets the true guru for him/her, the moment has been expressed with strong and emotional attachment as ‘a homecoming’ (Ram Das,

1978), and the student ‘overwhelmed’ and ‘knocked-out’ (Puttick, 1997), ‘filled with light’ and ‘seized by a sensation of love’ (Swami Kripananda, 1984).

Only one participant had an initiation with a guru, and was given her own Sanskrit name. She had a deep sense of belonging with her guru and her narratives were very different from the others. Her talk was filled with her psychic experiences and deeper spiritual feelings. Giddens (1991) calls it a “*reflexively organized relationship with commitment*”. Eliade (1969) says that the guru-student relationship is traditionally organized and time-honoured. However, the mode of organization in the traditional form of yoga schools with a guru is changing with time, and many schools are now run by the second, third generations, with professional, English speaking gurus (e.g. Bihar school of Yoga; Vini Yoga).

### ***Gender***

The majority of guru-guided yoga schools have been led by male gurus, and the majority of their students are female (Strauss, 2008; Sarbacker, 2008; Newcombe, 2008; De Michelis, 2004; Burley, 2008). Some small schools are guided by female gurus such as Sri Mataji Nirmala Devi of Sahaji Yoga (Coney, 1996), and Brahma Kumaris of Inner Space (web-site) mentioned by teacher A. In most yoga classes in Britain, they are dominated by Middle class female students (Sarbacker, 2008). In particular, BWY members are predominantly female, middle-class, white, and middle-aged (Newcombe, 2008). Heelas (1996) points out that women tend to be more expressive and reflexive, and eager to learn spiritual practices.

Strauss (2005) observes that while western classes have more female students, in India the situation is opposite in the ashram. The quality of teacher-student relationships differs accordingly (Smith, 2008). In the UK, as four participants described, in many female-dominated yoga classes, friendship or mother-daughter-like relationships develop between students and their teachers. These easy-going relationships are possible because of the common gender and the fact that they have a less authoritarian character than male guru-student relationships. However, Strauss (2005) and Michelis (2004) point out that this gender gap appears to be undergoing a change since yoga

teaching has become an alternative livelihood instead of other occupations, or a prosperous business enterprise.

### ***Transnational yoga practice***

The way in which people mobilize across nations typifies the circumstances we live in: the changing world of modernity. For example, there were seven different nationalities in the research group and the perceptions of ethnicity of its members played a part in their narratives. Transnational yoga seems to have influenced the participants deeply.

Although the original lineage of teaching came from India, the contents of teaching were westernized through the process of transmission. A global, eclectic culture seems to be rapidly establishing itself among yoga members in Britain, i.e. the participants did not have strong affiliations with religions, and the spirituality they mentioned was directed towards the inner self, health and well-being.

When Sarah Strauss (2000, p. 47) began researching yoga in Rishikesh in India, she quickly realized that she had to go to multi-national locations to find a ‘transnational community of practice’. Strauss describes a typical yoga teacher, a professional, who has the characteristics of ‘a citizen of the world’, i.e. his birthplace, places of growing-up, training grounds and teaching locations were different, and his students were multi-national. To a somewhat lesser extent, a similar transnational movement was increasingly taking place in the BWY community, and the teachers and learners in the classes were becoming multiethnic as illustrated in the profiles of the participants in Chapter Four.

Although one of the reasons of the success of yoga in the 60s in the media was that it was seen as a part of the counterculture hippy movement, actual yoga practice was introduced in the West differently. For example, yoga in the UK was introduced as a ‘stretch and relaxation’ leisure activity and disseminated through the Local Adult Education programme (Newcombe, 2008). The majority of participants in my study said that their place of learning was a local Adult Education class, and in their language, health and well-being weighed more than the counterculture movement of drop-outs and anti-establishment feelings.



The main aspects of transnational Yoga have been a source of various studies (e.g. De Michelis, 2004). There are other important factors contributing to making yoga a world-wide phenomenon. These include the colonization of eastern countries by the West, specifically India, the two world wars of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, economic crises, and the politicisation of yoga as a nationalist symbol by the emerging Hindu nationalist movement (De Michelis, 2004; Strauss, 2008 and 2005; McKean, 1996).

Campbell (2007) called the phenomenon of the cultural change in the west '*The Yogaization*', and he argued that the nature of western religion combined with Classical thought first gave birth to modern science, and consequently invited the decline of religion and secular theodicies, "*that created a cultural vacuum that only an Eastern outlook would be able to fill* (Campbell, 2007, p. 374)." In the process, religion rationalized itself, and by creating science it secularized itself and denounced its literal and historical claims to miracles. In the end, it was left with "*a totally secular, disenchanted, scientific worldview.*" He concluded that "*What happens next is that the West 'turns East', mainly because there is nowhere else to go* (2007, p. 375)." What Campbell means by the Eastern , or the New Age, worldview is "*For human beings, seeking out the person that they really are, finding that 'true inner being' or 'spiritual essence' that, it is assumed, exists within each and everyone, and giving it as complete an expression as possible, becomes their life goal.*" (Campbell, 2007, p. 129) Similarly Partridge (2004), Heelas (1996) and Hanegraaff (1996) write that the contemporary West is turning to 'the self'; that people place authority in the individual.

The New Age Movement in essence is positive and world-affirming, and inclusive. Yoga as a part of this movement enables practitioners to adapt its ideology to suit whatever their needs are. In particular, the BWY encourages its members to learn what interests them from external yoga teachers and organizations.

### ***Globalization and commercialism:***

There is no doubt that yoga is booming (Campbell, 2007; Strauss, 2005; Alter, 2004; Heelas and Woodhead, 2005; Singleton and Byrne, 2008; Newcomb, 2008). Singleton and Byrne (2008) point out that since the mid-1990s, the yoga boom has taken on global

proportions, and has become a very profitable enterprise. The yoga boom has also created a 'multi-billion dollar yoga industry' (Singleton and Byrne, 2008) worldwide.

De Michelis (2008, pp. 25-26) also asserts that the commodification of modern yoga is unprecedented, and that it has the characteristics of global capitalism and consumer societies. Alter (2004, p. 245) described,

*"The global form of transnational Yoga is clearly a subject that deserves more careful study. The topic alone contains some of the most fantastic examples of transnational transmutation and the blurring of consumerism, holistic health, and embodied mysticism - as well as good old fashioned Orientalism."*

The organization of yoga has changed drastically. As Giddens (1991, p. 32) comments, *"...the level of time-space distancing introduced by high modernity is so extensive that, for the first time in human history, 'self' and 'society' are inter-related in the global milieu."* Many Indian gurus come to Britain and other western countries in the summer. In return, yoga students often visit Indian ashrams in winter (De Michelis, 2004; Strauss, 2005). Teacher N's narrative illustrates a typical example of a transnational organization of Kripalu Yoga.

The BWY web-site says it has a large national operation in the UK and is a member of the European Union of Yoga, and it represents the UK at the European Federation of National Yoga Organization. But it does not have a permanent facility for its members apart from an office in Lincolnshire. On the whole, the BWY fits into the pattern that yoga communities are mobile, temporal and voluntary, and are neither geographically fixed nor fixed-member communities but *'an imagined community'* (Strauss, 2000; 2005), a kind of community that is only possible in the highly developed and mobile population of modern society. Yoga classes in big towns like London are becoming a blend of different people because of the practice of yoga.

As two participants commented, the BWY's magazine *Spectrum* was commercially aware, and advertised a number of courses and yoga goods. According to the information I gathered through BWY publications, mainly the quarterly journal *'Spectrum'*, its web-site and through direct inquiries to the office, its membership was approximately 8,500 in 2008 and is rapidly expanding, since it became the Yoga governing body in the UK.

As of 2010 the BWY will be the awarding body for the nationally recognized teaching qualification granted by Ofqual (Spectrum, 2008, winter). It will be known as British Wheel of Yoga Qualifications (BWYQ), and will be recognized within the new Qualifications and Credit Framework (QCF). Currently, the BWY organization is looking through the syllabus and setting up the new system of Continuing Professional Development (CPD) programs. In place of diploma, they are aiming to establish yoga in the firm professional framework, so that yoga will be accepted in the formal organizations such as schools and health organizations. The implications and ramifications of this development remain to be seen. However, it will imply the qualitative change of what has been understood to be yoga. When yoga is recognized as an NVQ level three qualification, it will be further standardized under this tightly controlled educational framework; it will become more secularized and health-orientated, and will undergo mainly science-based rationalization. With a more standardized new qualification, yoga teaching may in the future conveniently fit in the supply-and-demand system of the market place in the health industry.

The business manager of the BWY gave talks on *YouTube* and said that the organization aimed to be commercially viable (2008). It runs a yoga internet shop selling yoga products for commercial profit, and goods are priced accordingly. These systems of organization in yoga communities are also operating in a culture of capitalism and consumerism (De Michelis, 2008). As the participants' narratives illustrate, yoga practitioners also shop around before selecting one teacher, and when they want to change, they move on to someone else.

Heelas (1996) points out that the diffusion of the ideology has become more pronounced in modernity; one often finds it in consumer-friendly forms. For instance, yoga is no longer in the hands of the exclusive elite or 'cult' but is part of popular culture. Some of the yoga classes taught by teachers *A* and *F* were run by local NHS Trusts and local Social Services, and they were paid for as a part of CAM schemes such as reflexology, art therapy and craft workshops. These changes of employment status

explain the current medical/therapeutic movement towards medical plurality, which has been pushed by consumer choice (Cant and Sharma, 1999; Last, 1996; Bivins, 2007).

NHS-funded yoga therapy implies that the traditional quiet, spiritual cultivation of yoga has become a more recognized practice (NHS Evidence, 2010; The NHS Directory, 2006). The aim of yoga has become the very this-worldly attainment of a healthy body.

Newcombe (2008, p. 55) explains that the BWY originally began ‘as the autodidactic tradition’ in the late 1960s, “*using the structure of the Local Education Authority (LEA) adult education evening classes to facilitate the teaching of yoga.*”

Adult Education in Britain was built to produce and improve the skills of the workforce (Fieldhouse, 1996; Finger and Asun, 2001). In 1960, 57 % of vocational courses were mostly for working-class learners, and the middle-class attended the 43% more liberal courses (Newcombe, 2008, p. 60). As far as the whole society is concerned, Fieldhouse (1996, p. 399) says, “*the continuous lifelong education and training was the single most important means of remaining competitive in a global economy.*” However, Finger and Asun (2001, p. 131) argue that Adult Education has become one among many provisions in the cultural market of consumer society and has also become subject to the same competitive pressures and conditions of supply and demand. From the late 1990s to the early 2000s, with an exponential growth of interest in yoga, the public demand for yoga classes grew rapidly, as ex-tutor *O* described, and suddenly, teaching yoga as a profession became possible. A number of participants who were teaching with the Local Adult Education (LAE) classes left and went into private practice around that time. However, the efficacy of yoga practice is still useful in privately-run yoga classes, and is helping stressed and tired working people to relax and rejuvenate for work in the society (Singleton, 2005). Thus, the circumstances around yoga practitioners and the way modern yoga is practiced have been rapidly changing.

Next, I explore the unique features of the self who practice yoga in the modern world.

### ***The critical appraisal of the social self in the modern world***

The BWY provides syllabus-based, standardized yoga sessions where the lesson plan is essential. Compared to guru-guided schools, the BWY trained class teacher’s authority is non-charismatic, and discipline in yoga practice is largely left to the individual. The

teacher does not put pressure on learners to perform in a rigid, prescribed way. Instead, the teacher provides various modified forms so that the learner can choose the degree of physical force in the posture according to her/his ability. There is a limited variety of spiritual talks in the BWY classes. The BWY participants often explain 'the self' with words typical of the New Age generation, such as love, peace, awareness, and equanimity. Their beliefs are supposed to be aligned with the philosophy of Classical Yoga. In fact, these words are a form of 'self spirituality' (Campbell, 2007), 'self sacralization' (Heelas, 1996), 'a personalization of spiritual idea' (Newcombe, 2008), and these words characterise modern yoga practitioners' quest for meaning in life.

Without authoritative leaders, BWY practitioners sought their own choice of teachers out of a large list of the current leading yoga teachers. Newcombe (2008) terms this 'the autodidact tradition'. The tradition of autodidactic study used to take place in Local Adult Education classes. Yoga classes are taught following lesson plans, which are a part of the syllabus in a teacher training course. In this way, teachers behave according to the ethos of educationalists, i.e. following the guidelines of time management, risk management, equal opportunities, group management, assessment of the learning curve, evaluation of the lesson plan, and so forth. The authority of the teacher comes from their teaching diploma certificate and from their past experience (Newcombe, 2008). For learners, participating in yoga classes is often a consumer choice in physical education.

However, yoga has spread far beyond anyone's organizational control with rapid information technology. The search for spirituality and meaningful life in this climate of globalization is illustrated in the web-site *www.beliefnet.com*. It has been nicknamed a spiritual Wal-Mart, and is owned by Rupert Murdoch (FT, 1<sup>st</sup> March 2008). There has been a considerable disenchantment with this trend of pop culture in yoga among committed yoga practitioners. They seem to try to re-invigorate their life and re-orient the self through yoga again (Campbell, 2007; Nevrin, 2008). These serious yoga practitioners appear to regard the reflective meditative practice as the way to deepen their practice, as some of the long-term practicing participants in this study emphasized.

On the other hand, the BWY seemed to try to reach out to those who wish to learn non-denominational yoga in an unthreatening mode. For example, learner *K* said that he was

doubtful about yoga's spirituality and preferred yoga as a physical exercise and relaxation.

For most yoga practitioners in Britain, yoga still is a weekly exercise and relaxation. Apart from fortunate minorities of yoga practitioners who had time, energy and resources to travel and seek out their guru/special teacher abroad, most participants regularly attended yoga classes which were local and easily accessible.

So far in this chapter, I have considered the subjective perception of both 'the embodied self' and 'the social self' with the circumstances in which the participants practice yoga.

In the next section, I will explore and compare the four developmental models of 'the self', presented in chapter two.

### **6.3 The self in the framework of four developmental models**

I now turn to the four models of the self development in the related theoretical fields, to compare and contrast what the self is in these frameworks because by clarifying the similarities and differences, they enable us to understand the self of BWY practitioners.

#### ***6.3.1 Patanjali's Yoga Sutra: Classical Yoga***

Patanjali's Yoga Sutra (PYS) is regarded as the most important, and was generally referred to as 'the yoga philosophy' by yoga practitioners (Singleton, 2008; Liberman, 2008). PYS has been translated into various languages and the contents have been continually interpreted. In particular, the trend became more frequent in the last century with yoga's international dissemination (Callahan, 2007) as a frame of reference.

According to PYS, Eliade (1969) writes that the aim of yoga is to eliminate everyday normal consciousness and to attain a qualitatively different consciousness to know 'the ultimate self'. To this end, the practitioner must devote himself/herself to discipline and asceticism of practice. In the Indian philosophical tradition, the term consciousness is different from its western usage in psychology, medicine or science. Feuerstein (1997) explains that yoga's consciousness is regarded as the ultimate identity of human beings, and is also called 'the Self' (*atman* or *purusha* in sanskrit), which is the Spirit beyond body, mind and language. Therefore, Feuerstein (1997) concludes that 'the Self' cannot

be known through language expression, but it can be realized by the Being of the practitioner through practice. Among modern yoga practitioners, Singleton (2008) says that PYS is still habitually invoked as a source and authority for practitioners today despite the fact that it does not mention asana (postures) much.

There are two contradictions between what PYS preaches and what the BWY member practices. Firstly, Patanjali's realization model aims at the other-worldly orientated pure consciousness experience, whereas most modern yoga practitioners are hoping to obtain good health, well-being and relaxation here and now. Secondly, PYS suggests that the realization of 'the Self' is inward-looking and individualistic. In contrast, modern yoga practitioners, including the BWY members, practice together in a secular class environment. The togetherness, or being a part of the yoga community, is very important for the member.

However, there is a certain degree of inward-lookingness in relaxation and in a short meditation sometimes. As tutor *D* and teacher *N* explained, when they wanted further meditational experience, they had to seek opportunities outside and join a meditation retreat or ashram where the guidance of guru/teacher was provided. In PYS, there are four stages of the meditation process, and a further four stages of samadhi (a blissful state), but no participants mentioned any details of the contents of their PYS based meditation, although some participants mentioned practicing chanting, vipasana and Zen Buddhist meditation.

In my findings, the intellectualized explanations of the aim of yoga by Eliade and Feuerstein seem to be distant from the reality of the participants and the BWY practitioners in general. I found most participants were not aiming to realize 'the ultimate Self' or enlightenment through yogic devotion. The BWY members practice mostly part-time, or whenever it suits them, at various venues in exchange for a fee. However, most importantly, the participants developed, over the years, a positive sense of 'the self' and of their own spirituality, and found a meaning in life, in a much more secular manner than PYS expounded.

### **6.3.2 Maslow's 'Hierarchy of Human Needs': Human Potential Movement.**

Abraham Maslow postulated a developmental model of the self, 'A Theory of Human Motivation' (1943). His theory has been an influential force for the Human Potential Movement and has formed a part of the New Age Movement. Maslow's model has been applied in the various fields of social sciences. For instance, Freshwater and Robertson (2002) use this model to understand emotional needs in psychotherapeutic situations. Lee-Treweek (2005, p. 24) uses the model to illustrate the link between consumers' desire to use CAM and their long-standing illnesses. This model is also adapted and adjusted in this study's findings section to understand the participants' life crises at each stage, and their personal journeys towards their spiritual goals. In Maslow's original model, human needs are divided into five.

As we saw in the previous chapters, human needs in this study were re-defined as physical, illness, relationship, psychological, and spiritual needs.

As a leading humanistic psychologist at the time, Maslow was influenced by Eastern ideas (1970, p. x). In particular, his idea of self-actualization was influenced by Zen Buddhism. He originally described the peak-experience of enlightenment as being akin to a climatic explosion, a 'little death' and a rebirth.

Maslow (1970, p. xiv) later revises the idea, and terms it 'plateau-experience'; he states, "*The less intense plateau-experience is more often experienced as pure enjoyment and happiness*". Maslow (1970) explains that it has a serene, cognitive blissfulness and people with plateau-experience tend to seek a way to serve their community. However, he has been criticized for not explaining how to reach this highest state (Huitt, 2004).

In my findings, some long-term participants described their arriving at a stage where they enjoyed the gentle happiness of everyday living and having a peace of mind. Their achievement resembles more 'plateau-experience' than 'peak-experience' in Maslow's model. Moreover, the participants described their life journey through MPY practice. Their spiritual achievement was mediated by the bodily practice, and the sense of the bodily self was associated with the mind through the breathing practice and meditation.

Maslow says that the plateau-experienced people often become do-gooders for the society. As far as this comment is concerned, although some teacher participants



emphasized helping others with yoga skills, it is not possible to conclude that yoga practitioners are particularly more do-gooders and world-betterers than others.

### **6.3.3 Skill Acquisition model: Phenomenological Philosophy**

The Skill Acquisition model designed by Dreyfus was originally inspired by Merleau-Ponty's 'intentional arc'. Dreyfus and Dreyfus (1986, p. 4) explain that "*Human understanding was a skill akin to knowing how to find one's way about in the world.*" Fully learned skills become one's way of being in the world, and a way to relate to others. The process of one's skill acquisition has two dimensions: gaining the knowledge of practical 'know-how', and the person as an active agent who is learning, assimilating, and accommodating as a means of self-actualization for one's potential and finding meaning in the skill. Dreyfus and Dreyfus (1986) devised the process into five stages: novice, advanced beginner, competent, proficient and expert.

I changed their five stages to seven stages in yoga learning in the previous chapter. They are (1) novice, (2) advanced novice, (3) becoming an expert, (4) further training, (5) finding own path, (6) finding oneself, and (7) becoming a super-expert.

After the 3<sup>rd</sup> stage, when the participants gained yoga teacher's diploma, they seemed to search for spirituality or meaning in life. The difference between Dreyfus' model and the participants is that Dreyfus handled mainly vocational practical skills like computing while the yoga participants searched for personal meaning after the expert level at the 3<sup>rd</sup> stage. Yoga has similar progression stages up to expert level, but differs from Dreyfus' model because participants wanted to find their own path in yoga so that they could find meaning in life and would feel at peace with themselves. For the advanced yoga practitioner, yoga skills provide not only a place in society but also meaningfulness in life.

### **6.3.4 The Ten Oxherding Picture: Zen Buddhism**

The ten stages of the self-searching model in Zen are described in Chapter Two. Heidegger felt a strong affinity for these pictures (Watts, 2001; von Eckartsberg and Valle, 1981). The significance for Heidegger lies with the last two pictures, where the

9<sup>th</sup> picture depicts the man finding a peace of mind at home in everyday life's ordinariness. In the 10<sup>th</sup> picture, it depicts the man going out to the market, laughing, talking loudly and mixing with others happily. He has developed a deep compassion for his fellow human beings. The final goal of a Zen practitioner is participating in a society, and not an isolated enlightenment (Suzuki, 1935). In addition, the last stage is quite similar to Maslow's plateau-experience.

In classical yoga, the transcended mind is individualistic and inward looking. In comparison, the Ten Oxherding Pictures considers that it is important to mix with other people to find joy in life, in a similar manner Heidegger's Being is always with others and *care* matters.

In contrast with the Ten Oxherding Pictures, Patanjali and the tradition of the Western culture, including Heidegger, recommend establishing one's self-identity and encourage having a strong sense of one's own self, whereas Zen Buddhism which emphasizes negation of the self (Suzuki, 1935).

I found in this study that the majority of participants were trying to understand who they were and their own meaning of life, by choosing which path to take, clarifying what choices they had and how they could take part in the world. However, the big difference between this model and the others is about the nature of the self. Buddhists consider that the 'self' is empty and advise not to attach oneself to it. Participants *D* and *I*, also BWY members, voiced an affinity with the Buddhist idea of 'non-self', but the majority considered their sense of self as 'own self', for which they sought meaningfulness.

### ***6.3.5 Critical appraisal of 'the self' in the modern age***

The models presented above are useful when one tries, by comparison, to understand how modern yoga practitioners develop their 'sense of self', and what kind of the self it is for them. The following summary sheds a light on some aspects of 'the self' for them.

To recapitulate, 'sense of self' is an ordinary consciousness, and 'the self' has a conscious, ontological connotation in this study.

(1) The most important textbook for the BWY members is Patanjali's Yoga Sutra (PYS), which helps to maintain peace of mind and equanimity. The goal of yoga is the-other-

worldly according to the classic text PYS. However, most yoga practitioners take a strong interest in health and well-being within a comfortable middle class lifestyle and environment. In reality, modern yoga practitioners practice Modern Postural Yoga (MPY), which inherits Hatha Yoga tradition. The teachings of PYS urge an ascetic, disciplined path, but modern BWY practitioners are eclectic and part-time. Most of them do not have a guru, and the way they interpret or practice yoga is self-selecting. The only criterion for their choice seems to be that they feel healthy, comfortable and happy with it. The search for the self for the participants is developmental and progressive. The self in the above three models is this-worldly, excluding the self in PYS. The ideal self in PYS is intrapersonal, and lacks social and relational aspects except the guru-disciple bond. Its self is self-contained and hermetic. However, PYS has been respected as it explains the yoga cosmology of the self, and how to homologize the micro-cosmos self with the macro-cosmos self by purification through yoga practice and meditation.

(2) Maslow's plateau-experience seems closer to the ideals of the participants in their narratives. However, his theory lacks the methods of how to achieve the highest spiritual state. It also lacks the idea of embodiment, i.e. he does not include the body in his theory. For yoga practitioners, experiential feeling arising out of the body is a significant part of their sense of self.

(3) Dreyfus' Skill Acquisition is a useful theory up to a point. As he analyzed computing skill acquisition, spiritual satisfaction and the bodily sense of achievement are not included. In order to analyse and understand the yoga practitioners' sense of self, the spiritual aspect and a bodily sense of the self are vital, and Dreyfus's Skill Acquisition model remains incomplete for this study.

(4) The Ten Oxherding Pictures from the Zen tradition seem to be vaguely related to the modern yoga ideal. In fact, many yoga courses and workshops, which have been advertised in the BWY journal '*Spectrum*' use the word 'Buddhist Meditation' as a part of teaching. The Buddhist places a strong emphasis on having 'no-self' as the stage eight of the Pictures. At the final stage of the Pictures, it depicts the man talking to the people in the market, which symbolizes the social dimension of 'the self' who happily returns to practical activities among other people.

However, the pictures do not mention the bodily practice in a manner similar to yoga, but they suggest austere training and meditation on ‘no-self’, i.e. negation of the self. In contrast, Yoga finds a positive affirmation of the self in all Classical, Hatha, and Modern Yoga. Thus the main differences between yoga and the Buddhist Ten Oxherding Pictures are that yoga shows a deeper degree of involving bodily practice and positive acceptance of the self. On the other hand, the Pictures illustrate that the ultimate self features social involvement, and the BWY encourages secular social involvement. In fact, some participants talked about feeling free and being peaceful, but they were strongly attached to this-worldly values of health and social well-being too.

The issue of liberation is the point of discussion for two psychologists, von Eckartsberg and Valle in their ‘*Heideggerian Thinking and the Eastern Mind*’ (1981, p. 309), in which they compare the peak-experience of Maslow’s model and Heidegger’s path.

*“Both Heidegger and the Eastern traditions are concerned with the liberation of man from restrictive and self-limiting habits of his own cultural mind, from inauthentic modes of being and thinking...Both traditions develop paths toward liberation. For the Eastern way, this is a peak-experience in consciousness that completely transforms one’s relationship to the world and reality as a whole. For Heidegger, the path is one of thinking oneself through into a great simplicity of openness to the revelation of Being.”*

They assert that the Eastern path always aims to obtain a heightened-experience of consciousness. The key ideals for most Buddhist traditions are, however, such as everyday-mind, such-ness, and the harmonious bodymind (Suzuki, 1949). A peak-experience rather belongs to the New Age thinking. The later ideas of Heidegger leaned towards Zen Buddhism learning to *let things go* (Watts, 2001, p. 77). Yet, both share the same quest of searching for an authentic self, which is in common with the BWY practitioners.

For Merleau-Ponty (1962, p. xiv), the joy of *being filled with wonder* is because “*The world is not what I think, but what I live through. I am open to the world.*”

What they have in common is the phenomenological essential point of ‘*simple pleasure of being*’ (Watts, 2001). The Western tradition has a root in the traditional Cartesian thinking that the body and the mind are two separate units of a person (Csordas, 1994). With the secularization of the society and the development of science and medicine,

people needed to fill the void left by religion, and the West had to turn to the East (Campbell, 2007). Similarly, Medard Boss (1994, original work published in 1979) asserts that the Far Eastern being-in-the-world has been shaped by a traditional relationship with the world that is astonishingly close to the vision of European phenomenology. Boss (ibid.) says that, to feel happy, we need to relearn to re-unite the body and the mind again to the eastern idea of '*the bodymind*'.

Although the modern yoga self is said to have roots in India, in fact it has been constructed on the back of the New Age Movement. Modern non-religious yoga was spread through the Local Adult Education classes for fitness and relaxation. The self in the modern BWY is not the-other-worldly as PYS expounded, but is an eclectic amalgamation of this-worldly health and fitness, and the spirituality which arises from embodied bodily feeling in which proprioception, relaxation and breathing practice play important parts. The accumulated experiential bodily satisfaction and the help of yoga's classical 'philosophy' enable the practitioner to sustain difficult times and maintain an enduring sense of the self with positive outlook.

#### **6.4 'Dis-ease' and Yoga: the implications for public health**

I found that beginners practiced yoga to improve their health and to reduce their stress level. The term 'disease' is vaguely defined by Brown, Inhorn and Smith (1996, p. 185): "*Disease is generally seen as a failure of normal physiological activities and a departure from a state of health.*" In contrast to this, Brown and Timajchy (1997, p. 122) explain: "*Disease is distinguished from illness, which refers to a person's perceptions and lived experience of being sick or 'dis-eased' – a socially disvalued state that includes disease but is not limited to it.*" Thus, I use the word 'dis-ease' to refer to physically, psychologically, and/or socially devalued health.

In this section, I will consider this aspect of modern yoga practice.

##### **6.4.1 Secularization and medicalization of modern yoga**

In modern society, health has become big business, as the traditional idea of western religion weakens (Campbell, 2007). Yoga rapidly spread during the 1950s- 1970s,

because popular books such as Brunton (1947), Dukes (1960) and television programmes such as Hittleman's 'Yoga for Health' on ITV (1971) introduced it to a larger audience. However, Campbell (2007, p. 34) points out the fact that it largely gained in popularity as a form of exercise, and became disassociated from its fundamental spiritual justification.

Newcombe (2008) explains that modern yoga has been adapted to be therapeutic for the body, the mind and spiritually ill-at-ease people. By way of example, teacher *N* says that postures, breathing and relaxation practice work as moving meditation to help busy, stressed people to become useful again. Reflecting on the trend of contemporary society, De Michelis (2004) argues that the medicalization of yoga practice has taken the form of healing rituals. Van Gennep's (1960) theory on 'rites of passage' describes the rites of transition process in three stages: separation; transition itself; and incorporation. After going through the stages there will be a change of status, and transformation of roles in the community. De Michelis (2004) speculates that MPY has answered the modern requirements of fitness, de-stressing and newly emerging spirituality in the increasingly secularized world. In the modern yoga class sessions, the healing rituals are performed in three stages. The separation period from the outside world is the introductory quietening time, the transition phase is the MPY practice proper, and the third incorporation phase is the final relaxation time as a resolution. At the end of a session, the practitioner comes out as a refreshed, newly-emerged person again.

However, in a modern BWY yoga class, the necessity to see the class as a sacred ritual place is uncommon, as yoga practice is usually shared with other members *as a form of stretch and relaxation activity for enjoyment without ritualistic pressure*. Yet, over time, yoga seemed to provide healing power for the participants. Since the participants used yoga techniques (skills) to get better physically and psychologically, yoga skills become a Heideggerian ready-at-hand tool to 'empower' the participants to gain/maintain health through regular practice. If yoga practice is a transformative and health improving activity, then its effects manifest slowly over time.

### 6.4.2 Empowerment

The mastery of self control of the body, the mind and the environment is very important for ‘the sense of independent self’. Vincent and Furhnam (1998, p. 23) write on complementary therapy,

*“The need for patients to take personal responsibility for their health, the emphasis on more natural methods of treatment, a greater reliance on the body’s own healing powers, a concern with iatrogenic illness and the battle with the medical profession are familiar themes.”*

Stone and Katz (2005, p. 52) classify yoga as one of ‘Self-help techniques’ of CAM, where patients are expected to take responsibility for themselves, and, to some extent, for any outcome. It means that patients are expected to exercise power and control over the therapeutic informed activities appropriate for their condition.

Judging from some of the participants’ narratives and NHS web-sites (2006; 2010), yoga as a part of CAM seems to be increasingly integrated into medical settings. Nevrin (2008, p. 30) explains that the postural practice of attending to and with the body can existentially empower practitioners by making them feel more whole and alive. By learning a variety of new skills and practical yoga techniques, and taking part in an emotionally supportive environment with the teacher and co-practitioners, yoga practice can help to promote a positive change in the person from the view points of improved health, self-confidence and lifestyle.

One of the important findings in the previous chapter was that ***the modern yoga practice of the BWY is always social and cultural as well as physical***. As new learners join a yoga class, the reasons for joining tend to be triggered by health problems and stress. Newcombe (2008, p. 227) writes: “Physical suffering was a frequent motivation for beginning yoga practice.” In a MPY class, there is a teacher and other learners in the class to provide the practice space and share the practice time. De Michelis (2004, p. 211) refers to ‘*MPY practice as psychosomatic self-help*’. These learning environments also promote positive results, and encourage absorbing yoga knowledge and ideals of health (Nevrin, 2008). In other words, the progress of yoga practice skills takes place within the yoga community, and each stage of their progress is usually endorsed by others, e.g. friend, teachers, mentors, tutors and so forth. In the process, the practitioner

learns how to cope with health problems and life crises, and increases emotional control, getting closer to gaining personal and spiritual insight in a very private and secular way.

### ***6.4.3 Yoga practice as a form of health care system***

I discuss below how the participants in this study expressed themselves on the issue of dis-ease. The table below illustrates why the participants were motivated to start yoga, what made them continue to practice, and how they felt that the outcomes/achievements/benefits were concerning their sense of ‘dis-ease’.

**Figure 9: Dis-ease and its resolution**

	dis-ease, or event which triggered to start yoga	remedy or redemption
P1	Husband's degenerative disease	Bhakti-yoga, life support
P2	Children, Cancer	Self-development
P3	Children, Loss of father & menopause	Teacher training course
P4	Challenge	Yoga & self development, Contribution to others
P5	Birth of 3 <sup>rd</sup> baby	Yoga is time for myself
P6	Prenatal Yoga programme	Improved health, teaching professional
P7	Stressful life, loss of husband	Calmness and ability to cope
P8	Work Stress & injury	Peacefulness, equanimity
P9	Back-pain, Work Stress	Pain-relief, equanimity
P10	Busy lifestyle	Keeping up energy
P11	Stress, back problem & partner's recommendation	Exercise, partnership
P12	Depression, Psychiatric clinic	Improved mental health and fitness
P13	Depression, Divorce	Teacher training, life change
P14	Children, stress	Self-development, love
P15	AE keep-fit class, Yoga Book	Life long commitment, Contribution to others

The majority of yoga participants believed that yoga practice could help people with illnesses and medical conditions. There have been a considerable number of reports which back-up their beliefs (Parker and Parker, 2003). Melzack and Wall (1996, pp. 24-7) describe in a range of accumulated past research results that the feeling of control by the patient over their own body is very important for effective healing to take place.

There have been frequent reports in the media. For instance, Harvard Women's Health Watch (2006) stresses the benefits of deep breathing for everyday life. The Observer (Phillimore, 3<sup>rd</sup> October 1999) reports that children's yoga is helping their asthma to improve. The Health magazine (Folz-Glay, 2004) writes about nurturing the body with yoga and gaining a positive self-perception. Quantities of past research show that yoga is objectively aiding recovery from illness (Parker and Parker, 2003).



The adoption of yoga practice by various health-related organizations can be a great contribution to both the organization's staff and their patients/ clients as discussed in the previous chapter. The current trend is that an increasing number of health related organizations are providing yoga classes, as tutor *F* illustrated, in such places as day care centres, private companies, swimming pools, gyms and so on. However, the NHS directory (2006) suggests that the problem is that a regulatory body to control the quality of yoga therapists is missing.

Next, I will explore the ways in which yoga is treated as a therapeutic method.

#### ***6.4.4 Yoga as a Complementary Medicine***

The range of non-orthodox medicine has received many names in the past, for instance fringe medicine, unconventional medicine; natural medicine; alternative medicine and complementary medicine. For the last 10 years, there has been a gradual shift towards the term 'Complementary Medicine', which implies that the therapists are seen as supplements to orthodox/ biomedical treatment which enhances and strengthens the overall care offered to sick people (Heelas, 2006).

Fulder (1998) places yoga as one of the mind-body therapies in his "*The Handbook of Alternative & Complementary Medicine*". Many yoga therapists and teachers with remedial training now believe that they can work alongside medical doctors with special yoga knowledge (McCall, 2007; Stiles, 2000). Strauss (2005) points out that, in the West, attention to yoga's therapeutic usefulness is focused on chronic illnesses and is seen to originate in the diet and lifestyle of modern urban communities. Figure 9 shows that new comers to yoga suffer from various stresses, and psychologically enclosed feelings arising from having young children at home, as well as chronic illness.

NHS Evidence (2010) enthusiastically suggests, "Yoga has been used clinically as a therapeutic intervention and is believed to benefit physical, psychological and spiritual health." Similarly, the NHS directory (2006) writes, "Yoga is a holistic system for promoting homeostasis at physical, mental and emotional levels. When this balance is disturbed by illness, or the stress created by illness, yoga can help restore it, and help cure or manage illness", and the writer acknowledges, "Critical research trials show that

yoga therapy practices are among the most effective known methods for managing the psychosomatic, stress-related condition”.

To take some examples, Physical Therapy in the USA uses yoga techniques to increase the level of relaxation and awareness (Lasater, 1997). Pietroni (1993) also thinks that yoga’s breathing exercises and progressive muscular relaxation, and at times meditation and visualization, can help the dying. Wall (1999, p. 125) recognizes yoga as a useful tool to ease pain. Ornish (1990) recommends the methods of yoga as ecumenical and all-encompassing, particularly useful for the treatment of heart disease, and views yoga as a complement rather than a replacement for Western approaches to medical care. The newly-developing psychoneuroimmunology emphasizes the importance of complementary approaches and the use of yoga techniques in many areas of medicine is recommended (Watkins, 1997). Nagarathna (1990) and McCall (2007) suggest that yoga is a vast and complicated system encompassing many aspects of life and multiple levels of human physical, psychological and spiritual needs, yoga therapy techniques used in most therapeutic situations are specifically designed.

An example of therapeutic yoga research is Byatt’s (2004), who found that when he compared a yoga group with an exercise group in a cardiac rehabilitation programme, the yoga group participants reported that they had achieved mind/body benefits which included enhanced self-awareness, reduction in stress and anxiety, greater calmness, positive feelings, flexibility and suppleness within the body, whereas the exercise group participants, for their part, reported enhanced physical fitness and feelings of general well being.

Although postural work, breathing and relaxation are regarded as the most useful parts of yoga therapy (NHS Evidence, 2010), the extent of their techniques and usefulness are not often adequately recognized nor utilized. Since there is no standardized syllabus or qualification for yoga therapy, the quality of yoga therapeutic skill is not always guaranteed. Thus, the level of yoga technique used for the treatment of specific medical conditions usually remains at the beginners’ stage, i.e. basic level asana, pranayama and relaxation, at least for the BWY practitioners.

In addition, knowing the limitations of what yoga can do for the sufferers of dis-ease is important. The NHS directory (2006) mentions that **there have been a small number of reports about adverse effects of yoga**. Yoga in general has been recommended for stress related, chronic illnesses and health and fitness improvement (Strauss, 2005), and not for acute medical conditions.

As yoga spreads, scientific research on the efficacy of yoga is rapidly growing (Callahan, 2007; Parker and Parker, 2003).

#### ***6.4.5 Suggestions for health policy***

As I commented above, application of yoga techniques in the field of health and biomedicine is increasingly popular, and CAM is becoming a more acceptable therapeutic practice in public perception. Modern Yoga is aligned with science as its legitimization, and its application is medicalized (De Michelis, 2004; Alter, 2004). A number of guru-guided yoga schools run their own yoga therapy/remedial courses and clinics at their own research centres (Bihar school, Iyengar, Sivananda and others). In line with this trend of yoga as a form of complementary medicine, the BWY runs several health-promoting modules for already qualified teachers who wish to specialise in the field. They include (BWY web-site, 2009): Yoga for people living with cancer; Yoga for pregnancy; Yoga for children; Post-Natal Yoga; Yoga for the third age. In addition, proposed modules in preparation are: Yoga for sport; Yoga for dancers; Baby Yoga.

With these additional knowledge and skills, yoga can be a great aid for the management of the health of the general, non-medical population.

### **6.5 Reflections and suggestions for future research**

#### ***Reflections and limitations of the study***

There are some limitations and shortcomings in this study as well as my own unique contribution to the subject of yoga. Because I chose hermeneutic phenomenology as the methodology and the method of analysis, trustworthiness and transparency are

reflexively considered again. In order to ensure trustworthiness and transparency for this study, I evaluated some issues arising from this methodology as explained below.

There is a significant possibility of non-extrapolatability of the conclusion of the study. This study aimed to answer an ontological research question, the nature of ‘the self’ for the BWY practitioners, and I interviewed 15 participants who were members of the BWY, using hermeneutic phenomenology as the analytical method. Thus, this study was based on a small number of BWY practitioners’ subjective lived experiences of yoga, because the methodology needed in-depth analysis of data. The data-collection methods were snow-balling and theoretical, and samples mostly came from local members. The hermeneutic phenomenological analysis sought the deep, hidden meaning of their personal experiences (Benner, 1994; van Manen, 1990; Cohen *et al.*, 2000). Therefore, generalizing the findings to extrapolate to other groups of people may not produce the same results.

There might have been an element of the influence of my own personal experience in the analytical process. Concerning the ethical issue of transparency, I described the data collection and analytical process as it was carried out step by step in Chapter Four. However, there was an element of personal understanding when interpreting the data in the process, which was inevitable and the inherent nature of hermeneutic phenomenology (Polkinghorne, 1988; Denscombe, 2003). Hermeneutic phenomenology aimed to find the subjective experiences of the participants and consequently, the analysis and understanding were imbued with my personal past history and experience.

The sampling was based on the subjective account of a small number of yoga participants living in the South of England. They were mostly middle-aged, middle-class, and enthusiastic yoga practitioners who volunteered to be interviewed. They were also needed to be keen and articulate enough to be reflective of their yoga experience. As a result, they might not have been a typical representation of the BWY members.

The participants in this study may be different from those in other yoga groups. The reason is that a number of guru-guided yoga schools have not yet become affiliated to the BWY organization. I do not have any data about them to take into consideration. Therefore, research in other yoga organizations may give different results.

Hermeneutic phenomenology also dictates focusing on the experience itself, but not on the way language is spoken (Benner, 1994; van Manen, 1990; Cohen *et al.*, 2000). In other words, I did not focus on the manner in which language was used or behaviour was observed when I analysed the data (Flick *et al.*, 2004).

I also used four different models of development of ‘the self’ in related areas for comparison. They clarified the similarities and differences between ‘the self’ of modern yoga and ‘the self’ of these areas. As a result, the self in modern yoga was placed in perspective and became clearer through comparison.

The research question was of a deep personal interest for me. Yoga appears to be so ubiquitous that I suspect a similar level of interest in this topic is shared by a large number of people. I expect that there will be further flourishing research publications about yoga in various academic fields. I would like to make some suggestions for future research.

### ***Recommendations for future study***

Research into the modern form of western yoga has just started. Current yoga research has been mainly carried out either using quantitative methodologies or humanistic studies (Callahan, 2007; Parker and Parker, 2003). There will be an expansion of future research on the contemporary yoga practice in social sciences, such as anthropology, sociology, psychology, or health study, using qualitative methodologies. It will be productive to have a multi-disciplinary project team to interview and study a large number of yoga practitioners, and find out what’s really happening at the grassroots level. Yoga has become such an enormous phenomenon in a short time, that nobody has quite grasped the source of its dynamics yet.

## 7. Summary

In chapter Two, I explained there had been a great quantity of literature accumulated on the subject of yoga. Alter (2004, p. xviii) wrote, “*if there is one single thing that characterizes the literature on Yoga, it is repetition and redundancy in the guise of novelty and independent invention.*” This thesis is yet another attempt to write on yoga trying to add a new contribution. Up to now, most of current yoga research has been carried out mainly following historical, theological, scientific and medical approaches as shown in chapter two. On the other hand, there have been an increasing number of publications of biographical popular narratives of yoga practitioners, e.g. ‘Yoga in America’ (Bernstein & Weisenberg, 2009), as yoga spread in the West. However, I realized that there had been no yoga research in social sciences on the lived experience of modern yoga practitioners. As far as I know, this study is the first attempt to study the subjective lived experience of modern BWY practitioners using hermeneutic phenomenology, and the BWY office confirmed this in 2008. I believe that what this study uncovered will shed light on the reasons why yoga’s popularity has been growing in the British public.

This thesis aimed to explore the nature of ‘the self’ for the contemporary BWY practitioners. The data was collected from the yoga practitioners of the BWY as it officially represents British yoga populations. Hermeneutic phenomenology was chosen for this study because the research question required analyzing in-depth lived experiences of the small number of 15 participants. They were chosen by using the snow-balling and theoretical methods, and in-depth, semi-structured interviews were carried out. After hermeneutic phenomenological analysis, six major themes emerged. They were: Health and Well-being; Management of Life Crises; Sense of Self & Yoga Development; CAM & GP; Relationships; and Spirituality. These themes were explored and considered using the interview transcripts and other data. I found that the answer to the research question was “*an embodied self arising from the bodily practice, which is secular, social and progressing.*”

My argument in this thesis is that modern Yoga practitioners practice a modern form of postural yoga, newly developed in the 20th century in the West, and science/health orientated to suit their various purposes or to serve their needs in health and life.

The BWY was founded and spread during the latter half of the 20th century. It was accepted and disseminated on the back of the New Age movement and Local Adult Education classes. The BWY does not have any affiliation with a guru, and remains secular. The organization's teaching at the various stages of the members' progress is based on the syllabus in the educational framework. As a result, the participants felt that they managed to develop a healthier body and mind, and created a more holistic united 'self'. As they went through life crises, they were often helped by yoga in various ways, and they changed as a result. The key question I asked for analysis was each individual's relationship with their lived experience, and the way in which yoga practice had helped to develop their sense of self. The participants described how they started practising it, how yoga helped their lives in crises, and how they integrated it into their sense of self as they developed their own yoga path and made peace with themselves.

Yoga has been defined as a system of technology to develop and enhance the individuals' various potentials to reach their goal. I explored what embodiment meant for yoga practitioners, and discussed it along three dimensions: proprioception, relaxation and breath. I also considered social self for yoga participants such as language in the constructed yoga ideology, the teacher-student relationship, gender, transnational yoga practice, and globalization and commercialism.

Using the self-development theories of Patanjali's *Yoga Sutra*, Dreyfus's *Skill Acquisition* model, itself based on the ideas of Merleau-Ponty, Maslow's *Hierarchy of Human Needs* model, and Zen Buddhism self development model *The Ten Oxherding Pictures*, I compared 'the modern yoga self' with them. Although the BWY members revere Patanjali's *Yoga Sutra*, modern yoga is this-worldly and secular; the yoga self also has extensive inner self developmental stages compared with the Skill Acquisition model. At the same time, the modern yoga self is embodied and social compared with Maslow's model, and it is self affirming compared with the no-self of Zen Buddhism, although both share the social aspect of the self.

I proposed a way modern yoga practice can be of use for public health as a method of empowerment. Since I found that most participants started yoga because of ill-health and stress, it seemed that learning yoga skills enabled people to take control of their body again and maintain a healthy state. On the whole, long standing practitioners used its techniques when they encountered life crises. At each point in their decision-making, they seemed to learn to take it into their own hands. In turn, they offered to share their practices and to help others in similar situations. I also found that yoga practitioners used the teachings and techniques in an eclectic and pragmatic way. It seemed that yoga was, becoming increasingly accepted by the general public and orthodox medicine.

Yoga was developed in ancient India long before written history began. For 3000 years, it was practised as a system of physico-psycho-spiritual development for the chosen few (Eliade, 1969; Feuerstein, 1989). The knowledge of yoga was passed from the guru to his student directly in isolated training places. There seemed to be a sea change taking place in practitioners' way of thinking, practices, attitudes, social milieu, and in the way they constructed self-identity in a modern yoga community.

Smith and Boudreau (1986, p. 10) write "*Ultimately, yoga practice is the process of discovering who we are, and how and why we continue to exist*". This study has been a long-term work for me to understand my own 'the self' through yoga. As I have pointed out, phenomenology, yoga and Buddhism are closely linked.

I believe this study is unique in that: (1) It has brought in the new angle of Eastern thought and phenomenology to understand the newly emerging modern study of yoga practice. (2) I recruited the local BWY members for data collection and analysed the interview transcripts of in-depth lived experiences using hermeneutic phenomenology. (3) Although both hermeneutic and descriptive phenomenologies are increasingly used as research methodologies, their applications to yoga research involving the BWY is unique and the first one to take place.

It is important since yoga is becoming increasingly popular and the BWY officially represents the British yoga population. My belief is not groundless as, though I read an



increasing number of research publications carried out using phenomenological methods in various social sciences, they are not applied to modern British yoga yet.

This thesis reflects my own experience and insight into the BWY. The modern construction of the BWY has a slightly different history from that of Japanese Yoga which is more influenced by Buddhism. However, the self that I found in this study is fundamentally the same: the yoga self resides in the socially organized bodily practice and the subsequent establishment of positive embodied self-identity which is always in a process of development.

## References

- A multi-faith web-site: <http://www.beliefnet.com/> (27<sup>th</sup> June 2007).
- Akizuki, R. (1978). 秋月龍みん著作集 1 : 現代を生きる禅. 三一出版 (*Living Zen Today*. Tokyo: Sanichi publications).
- Alter, J. S. (2004). *Yoga in Modern India: The body between Science and philosophy*. Oxford: Princeton University Press.
- Alter, J. S. (2008). Yoga Shivar: Performability and the study of Modern Yoga. In Singleton, M. and Byrne, J. (eds). *Yoga in the Modern World: Contemporary Perspective*. London: Routledge.
- Andrews, G. J. and Hammond, R. (2005). Small Business Complementary Medicine: A Profile of Therapists and Their Pathways to Practice. In Lee-Treweek G., *et al* (eds). *Perspectives on Complementary and Alternative Medicine: A Reader*. London: Routledge in association with The Open University.
- Amaravati Buddhist Monastery (1988). *Introduction to Insight Meditation*. Hemel Hempstead: Amaravati Publications.
- Asp, M. and Fagerberg, I. (2005). Developing Concepts in Caring Science Based on a Lifeworld Perspective. *International Journal of Qualitative Methods*, 4, 2, Article 5. [http://ualberta.ca/~ijqm/backissues/4\\_2/pdf/asp.pdf](http://ualberta.ca/~ijqm/backissues/4_2/pdf/asp.pdf) (10<sup>th</sup> March 2006).
- Atkinson, P. and Hammersley, M. (1998). Ethnography and Participant Observation. In Denzin, N. and Lincoln, Y. S. (eds). *Strategies of Qualitative Inquiry*. London: Sage Publications.
- Austin, J. H. (1998). *Zen and the Brain: Toward an Understanding of Meditation and Consciousness*. London: The MIT Press.
- Azarya, V. (1996). Community. In Kuper, A. & Kuper, J. (eds). *The Social Science Encyclopedia* (2<sup>nd</sup> edition). London: Routledge.
- Bainbridge, W. S. (1997). *The Sociology of Religious Movements*. London: Routledge.
- Barret, W. (ed.). (1956). *Zen Buddhism*. New York: Doubleday.
- Batchelor, S. (1994). *The Awakening of the West: The Encounter of Buddhism and Western Culture*. London: Harper Collins Publication.
- Beatty, J. (1995). *Principles of Behavioral Neuroscience*. London: Brown & Benchmark Publications.

- Bellos, A. (2004). The Changing shape of Yoga. *FT Weekend*. 13<sup>th</sup> November. pp. W1-W2
- Benner, P. (ed.). (1994). *Interpretive Phenomenology: Embodiment, Caring, and Ethics in Health and Illness*. London: Sage.
- Benner, P. (2001). From Novice to Expert: excellence and Power. In *Clinical Nursing Practice (Commemorative edition)*. London: Prentice Hall.
- Bergman, A. & Norlander, T. (2005). "Hay sacks Anonymous": Living in the shadow of the Unidentified. Psychological Aspects of Physical Inactivity from a Phenomenological Perspective. *The Qualitative Report*. 10, 4, 795-816.  
<http://www.nova.edu/ssw/QR/QR10-4/bergman.pdf> (10<sup>th</sup> March 2006).
- Berman, B. M. (2001). Foreword to the first edition. In Ernst, E., *et al.* (eds). (2006). *The Desktop Guide to Complementary and Alternative Medicine*. Philadelphia: Mosby Elsevier.
- Bernes, E. (1971). *Transactional Analysis in Psychotherapy: A Systematic Individual and Social Psychiatry*. London: Grove Press.
- Bernstein, D. and Weisenberg, B. (eds). (2009). *Yoga in America: Passion, Diversity, and Enlightenment In the Words of Some of Yoga's Most Ardent Teachers*. Lulu.com Publishing.
- Bihar school of Yoga: <http://www.yogavision.net>. (22<sup>nd</sup> April 2007).
- Bivins, R. (2007). *Alternative Medicine: A History*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Blake, W. (1977). *William Blake: The Complete Poems*. London: Penguin Classics.
- Bloom, W. (ed.). (1991). *The New Age: An Anthology of Essential Writing*. London: Rider.
- Boss, M. (1994). *Existential Foundations of Medicine & Psychology*. London: Jason Aronson Inc. Original work was published in 1979.
- Brahma Kumaris Information Services: <http://www.innerspace.org.uk>. (22<sup>nd</sup> April 2007).
- Breckner, R. (1998). The Biographical-Interpretive Method – principles and procedure. In *Sostris Working Paper*. 2, 99-104.
- Brewer, B. (1998). Bodily Awareness and the Self. In Bermudez, J. L., Marcel, A. and Eilan, N. (eds). *The Body and the Self*. London: The MIT Press.

- Brown, P and Timajchy, K. H. (1997). Disease. In Barfield, T. (ed.). *The Dictionary of Anthropology*. London: Blackwell Publishers.
- Brown, P. J., Inhorn, M. C. and Smith, D. J. (1996). Disease, Ecology, and Human Behaviour. In Sargent, C. F. and Johnson, T. M. (eds). *Medical Anthropology: Contemporary Theory and Method* (revised edition). London: Praeger Publishers.
- Bruce, S. (1995). *Religion in the Modern Britain*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Bruce, S. (1996). *Religion in the Modern World: from Cathedral to Cults*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Bruner, J. (1990). *Acts of Meaning*. London: Harvard University Press.
- Brunton, P. (1947). *A Search in Secret India*. London: Rider and Company.
- Burley, M. (2007). *Classical Samkhya and Yoga: An Indian metaphysics of experience*. London: Routledge Hindu Studies Series.
- Burley, M. (2008). From Fusion to Confusion: A Consideration of Sex and Sexuality in Traditional and Contemporary Yoga. In Singleton, M. and Byrne, J. (eds) *Yoga in the Modern World: Contemporary Perspective*. London: Routledge.
- Byatt, K. (2004). *An Exploration of the Experience of Individuals Choosing Yoga or Exercise in a Continuing Cardiac Rehabilitation Programme*. PhD Thesis. Liverpool John Moores University.
- Callahan, D. (2007). *Yoga: An annotated Bibliography of Works in English, 1981-2005*. London: MacFarland.
- Campbell, C. (2007). *The Easternization of the West: A Thematic Account of Cultural Change in the Modern Era*. London: Paradigm Publisher.
- Cant, S. L. and Sharma, U. (1996). Professionalization of complementary medicine in the United Kingdom. *Complementary Therapies in Medicine*. 4, 157-162.
- Cant, S. and Sharma, U. (1999). *A New Medical Pluralism?: Alternative medicine, doctors, patients and the state*. London: UCL Press.
- Cassam, Q. (1998). Introspection and Bodily Self-Ascription. In Bermudez, J. L., Marcel, A. and Eilan, N. (eds). *The Body and the Self*. London: The MIT Press.
- Cerbone, D. R. (2006). *Understanding Phenomenology*. Stocksfield: Acumen.
- Chaffin, J. (2008). "Faith 2.0". *Financial Times Magazine*. 1<sup>st</sup> March, 24-27.
- Chamberlayne, P. and King, A. (2000). *Cultures of care: biographies of carers in Britain and the two Germanies*. Bristol: Policy Press.

- Chamberlayne, P., Bornat, J. and Wengraf, T. (eds). (2000). *The Turn to Biographical Methods in Social Science: comparative issues and examples*. London: Routledge.
- Chamberlayne, P., Rustin, M. and Wengraf, T. (eds). (2002). *Biography and social exclusion in Europe: experiences and life journeys*. Bristol: Policy Press.
- Charles, D. and Laughlin, J. R. (1994). Psychic Energy & Transpersonal Experience: A Biogenetic structural account of the Tibetan Domo Yoga Practice. In Young, D. E. and Goulet, J-G. (eds). *Being Changed: The Anthropology of Extraordinary Experience*. Cardiff: Broadview Press.
- Christians, C. G. (2005). Ethics and Politics in Qualitative Research. In Denzin, N. K. and Lincoln, Y. S. (eds). *The Sage Handbook of Qualitative Research* (3rd edition). London: Sage Publications.
- Clark, A. (1997). *Being There: Putting Brain, Body, and World Together Again*. London: The MIT Press.
- Clarke, J. J. (1997). *Oriental Enlightenment: The Encounter Between Asian and Western Thought*. London: Routledge.
- Clay, J. (1996). *R D Raing: A Divided Self*. London: Hodder & Stoughton.
- Cleary, T. (1995). *Buddhist Yoga: A Comprehensive Course*. London: Shambhala.
- Coffey, A. and Atkinson, P. (1996). *Making Sense of Qualitative Data: Complementary Research Strategies*. London: Sage Publications.
- Cohen, M. Z., Kahn, D. and Steeves, R. H. (2000). *Hermeneutic Phenomenological Research: A Practical Guide for Nurse Researchers*. London: Sage.
- Colaizzi, P. F. (1978). Psychological Research as the phenomenologist views it. In Valle, R. and King, M. (eds). *Existential-phenomenological alternative for psychology*. 48-71. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Coney, J. M. (1996). *Sahaja Yoga: A Qualitative Sociological Study of A New Religious Movement*. PhD Thesis, London School of Economics and Political Science.
- Csikszentmihalyi, M. (1992). *Flow: The Psychology of Happiness*. London: Rider.
- Csodas, T. J. (1983). The rhetoric of Transformation in ritual Healing. *Culture, Medicine and Psychiatry*. 7, 333-75.
- Csordas, J. T. (1994a). *The Sacred Self: A Cultural Phenomenology of Charismatic Healing*. London: University of California Press.

- Csordas, J. T. (1994b). Introduction: the body as representation and being-in-the-world. In Csordas, J. T. (ed.). *Embodiment and Experience: The existential ground of culture and self*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Csordas, T. J. (1997). *Language, Charisma, and Creativity: The Ritual Life of a Religious Movement*. London: University of California Press.
- Csordas, T. J. (2002). *Body/Meaning/Healing*. Hampshire: Palgrave MacMillan.
- Dallmayr, F. (1992). Nothingness and Sunyata: A comparison of Heidegger and Nishitani. *Philosophy East and West*. 42, 1, 37-48.
- Davis, B. W. (2006a). Kukai. *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*.  
<http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/kukai/> (28<sup>th</sup> January 2008).
- Davis, B. W. (2006b). Notes to The Kyoto School. *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*. <http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/kyoto-school/notes.html/> (28<sup>th</sup> January 2008).
- Davis, J. (1983). *The Golden Book of Yoga Terms*. Sleaford: The British Wheel of Yoga Publications.
- De Michelis, E. (2004). *A History of Modern Yoga*. London: Continuum.
- De Michelis, E. (2008). Modern Yoga: History and Forms. In Singleton, M. and Byrne, J. (eds). *Yoga in the Modern World: Contemporary Perspective*. London: Routledge.
- De Montfort University (2009). *The Code of Practice for Research Degree Students*.  
<http://www.dmu.ac.uk/research/degrees/code-of-practice/index.jsp> (4th August 2009)
- Denscombe, M. (2003). *The Good Research Guide: for small-scale social research projects* (2<sup>nd</sup> edition). Maidenhead: Open University Press.
- Denzin, N. and Lincoln, Y. (eds). (2003). *Strategies of Qualitative Inquiry*. London: Sage Publications.
- Denzin, N. and Lincoln, Y. (eds). (2005). *The Handbook of Qualitative Research* (3<sup>rd</sup> edition). London: Sage Publications.
- Descartes, Rene (1912). *A Discourse on Method*. London: J. M. Dent & Sons Ltd.  
 Original work was published in 1637.
- De Souza, R. (2002). Hearing Different Voices: Methodological pluralism in nursing education and research. *Research: Contribution to the Future of Nursing*. New Zealand: Hamilton.

- Di Gregario, S. (2004). *Introduction to ATLAS.ti: Software for Qualitative Data Analysis*. SdG Associates. <http://www.sdgassociates.com> (2<sup>nd</sup> February 2006)
- Diekelmann, N. L. *et al.* (1994). MARTIN, A Computer Software program: On Listening to What the Text Says. In Benner, P. (ed.). *Interpretive phenomenology: Embodiment, Caring, and Ethics in Health and Illness*. London: Sage publications.
- Dittman, K. A. and Freedman M. R. (2009). Body awareness, eating attitudes, and spiritual beliefs of women practicing yoga, *Eating Disorders*. 17, 4, 273-92.
- Doolittle, N. D. (1994). Clinical ethnography of Stroke Recovery. In Benner, P. (ed.). *Interpretive Phenomenology: Embodiment, Caring, and Ethics in Health and Illness*. London: Sage Publication.
- Dreyfus, H.L. (1982) *Intelligence Without Representation*.  
<http://www.hfac.uh.edu/cofsci/dreyfus.html> (28th January 2008).
- Dreyfus, H. L. (1991). *Being-in-the-World: A Commentary on Heidegger's Being and Time*. London: The MIT Press.
- Dreyfus, H. L. (1994). Preface. In Benner, P. (ed.). *Interpretive Phenomenology: Embodiment, Caring, and Ethics in Health and Illness*. London: Sage Publications.
- Dreyfus, H. L. (1997). *The Current Relevance of Merleau-Ponty's Phenomenology of Embodiment*. After Postmodernism Conference.  
[http://focusing.org.apm\\_papers/dreyfus2.html](http://focusing.org.apm_papers/dreyfus2.html) (28th January 2008).
- Dreyfus, H. L. and Dreyfus, S. E. with Athanasiou, T. (1986). *Mind over Machine, the power of human intuition and expertise in the era of computer*. New York: The Free Press.
- Dukes, P. (1960). *The Yoga of Health, Youth and Joy: A Treatise of Hatha Yoga adapted to the West*. London: Cassell.
- Editorial (2006). Breath control helps quell errant stress response: Breathe in deeply to a count of four and out again slowly. There. Don't you feel calmer? *Harvard Women's Health Watch*. August, 6-7. <http://www.health.harvard.edu> (24<sup>th</sup> February 2007)
- Eilan, N. (1998). Consciousness and the Self. In Bermudez, J. L., Marcel, A. and Eilan, N. (eds.). *The Body and the Self*. London: The MIT Press.
- Eisenberg, D. (2006). Forward to the second edition. In Ernst, E., Pittler, M. H. and Wider, B. (eds). *The Desktop Guide to Complementary and Alternative Medicine: An evidence-based approach*. Philadelphia: Mosby Elsever.

- Eliade, M. (1969). *Yoga: Immortality and Freedom* (2<sup>nd</sup> edition). New Jersey: Princeton University Press. Original work was published in 1958.
- Ellen, R. F. (ed.). (1984). *Ethnographic Research: A Guide to General Conduct, Research Methods in Social Anthropology I*. London: Academic Press.
- Ellis, C. and Bochner, A. P. (1996). *Composing Ethnography: Alternative Forms of Qualitative Writing*. London: AltaMira Press.
- English-Lueck, J. A. (1990). *Health in the New Age: a study in California holistic practices*. New Mexico: University of New Mexico Press.
- Ernst, E. (2005). The Evidence For and Against Common Complementary Therapies. In Lee-Treweek, G. *et al* (eds). *Perspectives on Complementary and Alternative Medicine: A Reader*. London: Routledge in association with The Open University.
- Ernst, E., Pittler, M. H. and Wider, B. (eds). (2006). *The Desktop Guide to Complementary and Alternative Medicine: An evidence-based approach*. London: Mosby Elsevier.
- Faulkner, A. and Layzell, S. (2005). Complementary Therapies and Mental Health. In Lee-Treweek, G. *et al* (eds). *Perspectives on Complementary and Alternative Medicine: A Reader*. London: Routledge in association with The Open University.
- Faivre, A. (2000). *Theosophy, Imagination, Tradition: studies in Western Esotericism*. New York: State university of New York Press.
- Feuerstein, G. (1980). *The Philosophy of Classical Yoga*. New York: St. Martin's Press.
- Feuerstein, G. (1989). *Yoga: The Technology of Ecstasy*. Wellingborough: Crucible.
- Feuerstein, G. (1990). *Encyclopaedic Dictionary of Yoga*. London: Unwin Paperbacks.
- Feuerstein, G. (1991). *Sacred Path: Essays on Wisdom, Love and Mystical Realization*. New York: Larson Publishers.
- Feuerstein, G. (1997). *The Shambhala Encyclopedia of Yoga*. Massachusetts: Shambhala.
- Feuerstein, G. (1998). *The Yoga Tradition: Its History, Literature, Philosophy and Practice*. Arizona: Hohm Press.
- Fieldhouse, R. and associates. (1996). *A History of Modern British Adult Education*, Leicester: NIACE.
- Fields, R. (1986). *How the Swans Came to the Lake: A Narrative History of Buddhism in America*. London: Shambhala.



- Finger, M. & Asun, J. M. (2001). *Adult Education at the Crossroads: Learning Our Way Out*. London: Zed Books.
- Finlay, L. and Gough, B. (eds). (2003). *Reflexivity: A Practical Guide for Researchers in Health and Social sciences*. London: Blackwell Publishing.
- Fish, A. (2006). The Commodification and Exchange of Knowledge in the Case of Transnational Commercial Yoga, *International journal of Cultural Property*. 13, 2, 189-260.
- Fisher, P and Ward, A. (1994). Complementary Medicine in Europe. *British Medical Journal*. 309, 107-11. Cited in Vincent, C. and Furnham, A. (1998).
- Flick, U., Kardorff, V. and Steinke, I. (2004). What is Qualitative Research? An Introduction to the Field. In Flick, U., Kardorff, V. and Steinke, I. (eds). *A Companion to Qualitative Research*. London: Sage Publications.
- Flick, U., Kardorff, V. and Steinke, I. (eds). (2004). *A Companion to Qualitative Research*. London: Sage Publications.
- Flick, U. (2002). *An Introduction to Qualitative Research* (2<sup>nd</sup> edition). London: Sage Publication.
- Foltz-Gray, D. (2004). Nurture your Body Image with Yoga. In *Fitness, Health*. 18, 1, 59-63.
- Frank, A. W. (1995.) *The Wounded Storyteller: Body, Illness and Ethics*. London: The University of Chicago Press.
- Freshwater, D. and Robertson, C. (2002). *Emotions and Needs*. Buckingham: Open University Press.
- Friedeberger, J. (1996). *A Visible Wound: A Healing Journey Through Breast Cancer*. Dorset: Element.
- Friman, M., Nyberg, C, and Norlander, T. (2004). Threats and aggression directed at soccer referees: An empirical phenomenological psychological study. *The Qualitative Report*. 9, 4, 652-672.
- Fromm, E., Suzuki, D. T. and De Martino, R. (1960). *Zen Buddhism and Psychoanalysis: How the wisdom of East and West can unite to bring meaning to our lives*. London: Souvenir Press.
- Fukushima, M. (副島正光) (1996). 大乘仏教の思想、清水書院. (*Thought of Mahayana Buddhism*. Tokyo: Shimizu publications).

- Fukuyama, S. (2005). Middle Nishida philosophy and The Ten Oxherding Pictures: A Study of the system of the universal and the self-consciousness. *Nihon University Graduate School of Social and Cultural Studies annals*. 6, 303- 314.
- Fulder, S. (1996). *The Handbook of Alternative & Complementary Medicine: the Essential Health Companion* (3<sup>rd</sup> edition). London: Vermilion.
- Furnham, A. (2000). How the public classify complementary medicine: a factor analytic study. *Complementary Therapies in Medicines*. 8, 82-87.
- Gallagher, S. (1998). Body Schema and Intentionality. In Bermudez, J. L., Marcel, A. and Eilan, N. (eds). *The Body and the Self*. London: The MIT Press.
- Gallagher, S. and Marcel, A. J. (1999). The Self in Contextualized Action. In Gallagher, S. and Shear, J. (eds). *Models of THE SELF*. Thorverton: Imprint Academic.
- Garde, R. K. (1975). *Principles and Practice of Yoga Therapy*. London: Wolfe Publishing Limited.
- Garrett, C. (2001). Transcendental Meditation, Reiki and Yoga: Suffering, Ritual and Self-Transformation. *Journal of Contemporary Religion*. 16, 3, 229-342.
- Geertz, C. (1973). *The Interpretation of Culture*. London: Fontana Press.
- Gessel, A. H. (1989). Edmund Jacobson, M.D., PhD: The Founder of Scientific Relaxation. *International Journal of Psychosomatics*. 36, 1-4.  
<http://www.progressiverelaxation.org> (22<sup>nd</sup> June 2008).
- Giddens, A. (1991). *Modernism and Self-identity: Self and Society in the Late Modern Age*. Cambridge: Polity Press.
- Giorgi, A. (ed.). (1985). *Phenomenology and Psychological Research*. Pittsburgh : Duquesne University Press.
- Glaser, B. G. and Strauss, A. L. (1967). *The Discovery of Grounded Theory: Strategies for Qualitative Research*. Chicago: Aldine.
- Goldacre, B. (2009). *Bad Science*. London: Fourth Estate.
- Good, J. (1990). *Medicine, rationality, and experience: An anthropological perspective*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Graham, H. (1999). *Complementary Therapies in Context: The Psychology of Healing*. London: Jessica Kingsley Publishers.
- Grof, S. (ed.). (1984). *Ancient Wisdom and Modern Science*. New York: State University of New York.

- Grof, S. (1997). *Stormy Search for the Self: A Guide to Personal Growth Through Transformational Crisis*. London: J.P. Tarcher.
- Gryzybowski, E. (1997). *Teach Yourself Yoga*. Australia: Crows Nest, NSW.
- Hammersley, M. & Atkinson, P. (1995). *Ethnography: Principles in Practice*. London: Rutledge.
- Hanegraaff, W. J. (1996). *New Age Religion and Western Culture: Esotericism in the Mirror of Secular Thought*. Leiden: Brill.
- Harris, T. (2005). *Midwifery Practice in the Third Stage of Labour*. PhD Thesis. De Montfort University.
- Hayward, J., Rdzogs-Chen, A. (1999). Buddhist Interpretation of The Sense of Self. In Gallagher, S. and Shear, J. (eds). *Models of The Self*. Thorverton: Imprint Academic.
- Heelas, P. (1996). *The New Age Movement: The Celebration of the Self and the Sacralization of Modernity*. London: Blackwell Publishers.
- Heelas, P., Woodhead, L., Seel, B., Szerszynski, B. and Tusting, K. (2005). *The Spiritual Revolution: why religion is giving way to spirituality*. Oxford: Blackwell.
- Heelas, P. (2006). Nursing Spirituality. In *Spirituality and Health International*. 7, 1. London: Wiley InterScience.
- Heidegger, M. (1962). *Being and Time*. Oxford: Blackwell.
- Heinbeck, R. S. (1986). Foreword. In Smith, B. and Smith, L. B. (1986) *Yoga for a New Age: A Modern Approach to Hatha Yoga*. Seartle: Smith Productions.
- Heller, T. and Spurr, S. (2005). Introduction In Heller, T. at al (ed.). *Perspectives on Complementary and Alternative Medicine*. London: Routledge in association with The Open University.
- Hewitt, J. (1982). *Teach yourself Relaxation*. London: Hodder and Stoughton.
- Hewitt, J. (1991). *The Complete Yoga Book: The Yoga of Breathing, Posture, and Meditation* (2<sup>nd</sup> edition). London: Rider. First published in 1983.
- Hirai, T. (1989). *Zen Meditation and Psychotherapy*. New York: Japan Publications.
- Hittleman, R. (1966). *Yoga for Physical Fitness*. Preston: A. Thomas & Co.
- Hittleman, R. (1969). *Guide to Yoga Meditation: The Inner Source of Strength, Security and Personal Peace*. London: Bantam Books.

- Hitzler, R. and Eberle, T. S. (2004). Phenomenological Life-world Analysis. In Flick, U., von Kardorff, E. and Steinke, I. (eds). *A companion to Qualitative Research*. pp. 67-71. London: Sage Publications.
- Holloway, I. and Freshwater, D. (2007). *Narrative research in Nursing*. Oxford: Blackwell Publishing.
- Hosaka, S. (保坂俊司). (2004). *仏教とヨーガ*、東京書籍 (*Buddhism and Yoga*, Tokyo Publications).
- Huitt, W. (2004). Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs, *Educational Psychology interactive*. Valdosta, GA Valdosta State University.  
<http://chiron.valdosta.edu/whuitt/col/regsys/maslow.html> (11th February 2008).
- Husserl, E. (1931) *Ideas*. London: George Allen & Unwin.
- Husserl, E. (1970). *The Crisis of European Sciences and Transcendental Phenomenology*. Evanston: Northwestern University Press.
- Husserl, E. (1977). *Phenomenological psychology*. The Hague: Nijhoff.
- Inwood, M. (1997). *Heidegger" a Very Short Introduction*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Ishikawa, W. (石川中). (1981). *瞑想の科学：新しい精神世界への飛翔*、講談社 (*Science of meditation: Departure to the world of new thinking*, Koudansha Publications).
- Iyengar, B. K. S. (1988). *Yoga Vrksha: The Tree of Yoga*. Oxford: Fine Line Books.
- Jacobson, E. (1938). *Progressive Relaxation: A Physical and Clinical Investigation of Muscular States and their Significance in Psychology and Medical Practice* (2<sup>nd</sup> edition). London: University of Chicago Press. First published in 1929.
- Jacobson, E. (1977). *You must relax*. London: Unwin Paperbacks.
- James, W. (1902). *The Varieties of Religious Experience: A Study in Human Nature*. London: Longmans, Green, and Co.
- James, W. (1950). *The Principles of Psychology I & II* (Dover edition). New York: Dover Publications. Original work was published in 1890.
- Johnson, G. A. (1999). Inside and Outside: Ontological Considerations. In Olkowski, D. and Morley, J. (eds). *Merleau-Ponty, Interiority and Exteriority, Psychic Life and the World*. Albany: State University of New York Press.
- Jones, K. (2001). *Narratives of Identity and the Informal Care Role*. PhD Thesis. De Montfort University.

- Jones, K. (2004). The turn to a narrative knowing of persons: minimalist passive interviewing technique and team analysis of narrative qualitative data. In Rapport, F. (ed.). *New Qualitative Methodologies in Health and Social Care Research*. London: Routledge.
- Jung, C. G. (1995). *Jung on the East*. London: Routledge. Original work was published in 1936.
- K. Ikegami. (ed.). (2008). Merleau-Ponty: Deepening and expansion of Embodiment. *Revue de la pensee d'aujourd'hui* 12. Tokyo: Seitosha.
- Karmananda Saraswati, Swami (1986). *Yogic Management Of Common Diseases*. Munger (India): Bihar School of Yoga Publications.
- Kazashi, N. (1999). Bodily Logos: James, Merleau-Ponty, and Nishida. In Olkowski, D. and Morley, J. (eds). *Merleau-Ponty, Interiority and Exteriority, Psychic Life and the World*. Albany: State University of new York Press.
- Keleman, S. (1985). *Emotional Anatomy*. Berkley: center press.
- Kelle, U. (2004). Computer-assisted Analysis of Qualitative Data. In Flick, U., *et al* (eds). *A Companion to Qualitative Research*. London: Sage Publications.
- Kida, H. (木田元). (1993). ハイデガーの思想、岩波書店 (*Heideggerian thought*, Tokyo: Iwanamishoten Publications).
- Kinsey, P. (1986). *Meditation Experiences and Coping Behaviour*. PhD thesis. University of London.
- Kjaer, T. W., Bertelson, C., *et al.* (2002). Increased dopamine tone during meditation-induced change of consciousness. *Cognitive Brain Research*. 13, 255 – 259.
- Kock, C. (2004). *The Quest for Consciousness: A neurological approach*. Colorado : Roberts & Company Publishers.
- Kotoh, T. (1987). Language and Silence: Self-Inquiry in Heidegger and Zen. In Parkes, G. (ed.). *Heidegger and Asian Thought*. Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press.
- Kotoh, T. (古東哲明). (2002). ハイデガー＝存在神秘の哲学、講談社 (*Heidegger＝philosophy of existential mysticism*, Koudansha Publications).
- Kripananda, Swami (1984). Kundalini: The Energy of Transformation. In Grof, S. (ed.). *Ancient Wisdom and Modern Science*. New York: State University of New York Press.

- Kubota, J. (1996). *The Ten Oxherding Pictures with the Verses Composed by Kakuan Zenji, Paintings by Tatsuhiko Yokoo*. (translators). J. Cusumano & M. Sato, <http://www.terebess.hu/english/oxherding.html> (14<sup>th</sup> May 2008).
- Kuei-Min, C., Wei-Shyuan, T., *et al.* (2007). Development and Evaluation of a Yoga Exercise Programme for Older Adults. *Journal of Advanced Nursing*. 57, 4, 432-441.
- Kuznar, L. A. (1996). *Reclaiming a Scientific Anthropology*. London: Sage Publications.
- Kvale, S. (1996). *Inter-Views: An Introduction to Qualitative Research Interviewing*. London: Sage Publications.
- Laing, R. D. (1970). *The Divided Self*. London: Pelican books.
- Langer, M. M. (1989). *Merleau-Ponty's Phenomenology of Perception: A Guide and Commentary*. Florida: The Florida State University Press.
- Lasater, J. (1997). Untying The Knot: Yoga as Physical Therapy. In C. M. Davis (ed.) *Complementary Therapies in Rehabilitation: Holistic Approaches for Prevention and Wellness*. New Jersey: John H. Bond.
- Last, M. (1996). The professionalization of indigenous healers. In Sargent, C. F. and Johnson, T. M. (eds). *Medical Anthropology: Contemporary Theory and Method* (revbised edition). London: Praeger.
- Lee-Treweel, G. (2005). Chapter 1: Changing perspectives. In Heller, T., *at al* (eds). *Perspectives on Complementary and Alternative Medicine*. London: Routledge in association with The Open University.
- Leonard, V. W. (1994). A Heideggerian Phenomenological Perspective on the Concept of Person. In Benner, P. (ed.). *Interpretive Phenomenology: Embodiment, Caring, and Ethics in Health and Illness*. London: Sage Publications.
- Isaacson, L. (2008). BWY Education Committee report. *Spectrum*. Winter. Sleaford: The BWY publication.
- Lieberman, K. (2008). The Reflexity of the Authenticity of Hatha Yoga. In Singleton, M. and Byrne, J. (eds). *Yoga in the Modern World: Contemporary Perspective*. London: Routledge.
- Lieblich, A, Tuval-Mashiach, R. and Ziber, T and T. M. (1998). *Narrative Research: Reading, Analysis, and Interpretation*. Applied Social Research Methods Series vol. 47. London: Sage Publications.

- Long, L., Huntley, A. and Ernst, E. (2001). Which complementary and alternative therapies benefit which conditions? A survey of the opinions of 223 professional organizations. *Complementary Therapies in medicine*. 9, 178-185.
- Luff, D. and Thomas, K. (2005). Complementary Therapy Provision in Primary Care – Policy Considerations Based on Case Studies in Practice. In Lee-Treweek, G., Heller, T., Spurr, S., MacQueen, H. and Katz, J. (eds). *Perspectives on Complementary and Alternative Medicine: A Reader*. London: Routledge in association with The Open University.
- MacGuire, M. B. (1990). Religion and the Body: Rematerializing the Human Body in the Social Science of Religion. *Journal of the Scientific Study of Religion*. 29, 3, 283-296.
- Maggs-Rapport, F. (2000a). Combining methodological approaches in research: ethnography and interpretive phenomenology. *Journal of Advanced Nursing*. 30, 1, 219-225.
- Maggs-Rapport, F. (2000b). 'Best Research Practice': in pursuit of methodological rigour, Methodological Issues in Nursing Research. *Journal of Advanced Nursing*. 35, 3, 373-383.
- Maggs-Rapport, F. (2001). *Exploring the 'Lived Experience' of potential egg share donors: A hermeneutic phenomenological approach*. PhD thesis. Stafford University.
- Maraldo, J. (1997). Contemporary Japanese Philosophy. In Carr, B. and Mahalingam, I. (eds). *Companion Encyclopaedia of Asian Philosophy*. London: Routledge.
- Maraldo, J. (2005). Zen and Philosophy: An Intellectual Biography of Nishida Kitaro (review). *The Journal of Japanese Studies*. 31, 1, 223-227.
- Marcus, G. E. (1995). Ethnograph In/Of the World System: The Emergence of Multi-cited Ethnography. *Annual Review of Anthropology*. 24, 95-117. Cited in Strauss, S. (2000). Locating Yoga: Ethnography and transnational practice. In Amit, V. (ed.). *Constructing The Field: Ethnographic Fieldwork in the Contemporary World*. London: Routledge.
- Marcus, T. (2007). The rise of the jet-set yogi. *The Sunday Times Style Magazine*. 25th March, 14-15.
- Marion, J-L. (1998). *Reduction and Givenness: Investigations of Husserl, Heidegger, and Phenomenology*. Evanston: Northwestern University Press.

- Martin, M. G. F. (1998). Bodily Awareness: A Sense of Ownership. In Bermudez, J. L., Marcel, A. and Eilan, N. (eds). *The Body and the Self*. London: The MIT Press.
- Maslow, A. H. (1943). A Theory of Human Motivation. *Psychological Review*. 50, 370-396. <http://psychclassics.yorku.ca/Maslow/motivation.htm>. In Classics in the History of Psychology. An Internet resource developed by Green, C. D. (posted August 2000). York University, Toronto. (21<sup>st</sup> February 2006).
- Maslow, A.H. (1968). *Toward a Psychology of Being* (3rd edition). Chichester: John Wiley & Sons.
- Maslow, A .H. (1970). *Religions, Values, and Peak-experiences*. London: Penguin Books. First published in 1964.
- Maslow, A. H. (1987). *Motivation and personality* (3rd edition). New York: Harper and Row. First published in 1954.
- Matsunaga, U. (松永有慶) (1991) 密教. 岩波書店 (*Esotericism*. Tokyo: iwanami shoten) .
- Matthews, E. (2006). *Merleau-Ponty: A Guide for the Perplexed*. London: Continuum.
- May, R. (1996). *Heidegger's hidden sources: East Asian influences on his work*. London: Routledge.
- McAdams, D. P. (1993). *The Stories We Live By: Personal Myths and the Making of the Self*. London: The Guilford Press.
- McCall, T. (2007). *Yoga as Medicine: The Yogic Prescription for Health and Healing*. New York: Bantam Dell.
- McCracken, G. (1988). The Long Interview. *Qualitative Research Methods Series 13*. London: A Sage University Press.
- McElroy-Cox, C. (2009). Alternative approaches to epilepsy treatment. *Current Neurology And Neuroscience Reports*. 9, 4, 313-8.
- McKean, L. (1996). *Divine Enterprise: Gurus and Hindu Nationalist Movement*. London: The University of Chicago Press.
- Melzack, R. and Wall, P. (1996). *The Challenge of Pain* (revised edition). London: Penguin Books.
- Mercuri, N., Olivera, E. M. *et al* (2000) Yoga practice in people with diabetes. *Diabetes Research and Clinical Practice*. 50, sup. 34-235.
- Merkens, H. (2004). Selection Procedures, Sampling, Case Construction. In Flick, U. *et al.* (eds). *A Companion to Qualitative Research*. London: Sage Publications.



- Merleau-Ponty, M. (1962). *Phenomenology of Perception*. London: Routledge.
- Merleau-Ponty, M. (1964a). *Signs*. Evanston: Northwestern University Press.
- Merleau-Ponty, M. (1964b). *The Primacy of Perception*. Evanston: Northwestern University Press.
- Merleau-Ponty, M. (1968). *The Visible and the Invisible*. Evanston: Northwestern University Press.
- Merleau-Ponty, M. (1983 [1963]). *The Structure of Behaviour*. Pittsburgh: Duquesne University Press.
- Merskey, H. (ed.). (1986). Classification of chronic pain: Descriptions of chronic pain syndromes and definitions of pain terms'. *Pain*, supplement, 3, S1, 225.
- Metzinger, T. (ed.). (1995). *Conscious Experience*. Schöningh: Imprint Academic.
- Mitchell, A. and Cormack, M. (1998). *The Therapeutic Relationship in Complementary Health Care*. London: Churchill Livingstone.
- Monro, R., Ghosh, A. k. 7 Kalish, D. (1989). *Yoga Research Bibliography: Scientific Studies On Yoga and Meditation*. London: Yoga Biomedical Trust.
- Moon, S. I. S. (1988). *The Life and Letters of Tofu Roshi*. Shaftesbury: Shambhala.
- Mori, M. (森三樹三郎) (1978). *中国思想史 (上. 下) 第三文明社. (History of Chinese philosophy*. Tokyo: Daisanbunmeisha Publication).
- Morley, J. (1999). Aterward. In Olkowski, D. and Morley, J. (eds). *Merleau-Ponty: Interiority and Exteriority. Psychic Life and the World*. Albany: State University of New York Press.
- Morley, J. (2001) Inspiration and expiration: Yoga practice through Merleau-Ponty's phenomenology of the body, *Philosophy East and West*. 51, 1, 73-82.
- Morris, K. (1998). Meditating on yogic science. *The Lancet*. 351, 9108, 1038.
- Moustakes, C. (1994). *Phenomenological Research Methods*, London: Sage Publications, London
- Mruk, C. J. (1983). Towards a phenomenology of self-esteem. In Giorgi, A. *et al* (eds). *Duquesne studies in phenomenological psychology*. 4, 137-149. Pittsburgh: Duquesne University Press.
- Nagakawa, T., and Ikemi, Y. (1982). A new model of integrating occidental and oriental approaches. *Journal of Psychosomatic Research*. 26, 1, 57-62.

- Nagao, G. M. (1991). *Madhyamika and Yogacara*. New York: State University of New York Press
- Nagarathna, R, Nagendra, H. R. & Monro, R. (1990). *Yoga for Common Ailments*. London: Gaia Books Limited.
- Naitou, K. (内藤景代) (1991). ヨガと冥想：入門から神秘体験へ、実業の日本社. (*Yoga and meditation: From novice to esoteric experience*. Tokyo: Jitsugyounonihonsha Publications).
- Nakamura, H. (1964). *Ways of Thinking of Eastern Peoples: India, China, Tibet, Japan*. Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press.
- Nakamura, H. (中村元). (1970). 原始仏教：その思想と生活、日本放送出版協会 (*Primary Buddhism: Its philosophy and life*. Tokyo: Japan Broadcasting Corporation Publications).
- National Patient Safety Agency (2009). *National Research Ethics Service: Year in Review 2008-9*. <http://www.nres.npsa.nhs.uk>. (21<sup>st</sup> July 2009).
- Nettleton, S. *et al* (2005a). Understanding the narratives of people who live with medically unexplained illness. *Patient Education and Counselling*. 56, 205-210. <http://www.elsevier.com/locate/pateducou>. (3<sup>rd</sup> March 2006).
- Nettleton, S., Watt, I., O'Malley, L., and Duffey, P. (2005b). Understanding the narratives of people who live with medically unexplained illness. *Patient Education and Counselling*. 56, 205-210.
- Nevrin, K. (2008). Empowerment and Using the Body in Modern Postural Yoga. In Singleton, M. and Byrne, J. (eds). *Yoga in the Modern World: Contemporary Perspective*. London: Routledge.
- Newcombe, S. (2008). *A Social History of Yoga and Ayurveda in Britain, 1950-1995*. PhD Thesis. University of Cambridge.
- NHS Evidence (2010). complementary and alternative medicine. <http://www.library.nhs.uk/cam/ViewResource.aspx?resID=373691&tabID=290>. (20<sup>th</sup> July 2010).
- Nursing & Midwifery council (2007). *The Code*. <http://www.nmc-uk.org>. (15<sup>th</sup> April 2009).
- O'Shaughnessy, B. (1998). Proprioception and the Body Image. In Bermudez, J. L., Marcel, A. and Eilan, N. (eds). *The Body and the Self*. London: The MIT Press.

- Okano, M. (岡野守也) (1998) *唯識のすすめ：仏教の深層心理学入門*, 日本放送出版協会  
(*Recommendation of Yuishiki: Beginner's guide to Buddhist deep psychology*. Japan  
Broadcasting Corporation Publications).
- Olkowski, D. (1999). The Continuum of Interiority and Exteriority in the Thought of  
Merleau-Ponty. In Olkowski, D. and Morley, J. (eds). *Merleau-Ponty: Interiority and  
Exteriority. Psychic Life and the World*. Albany: State University of New York Press.
- Ornish, D. (1990). *Dr. Dean Ornish's Program for Reversing Heart Disease*. New  
York: Ballantine Books.
- Parker, J. N. and Parker, P. M. (2003). *Yoga: A Medical Dictionary, Bibliography, and  
Annotated Research Guide to Internet References*. San Diego: ICON Health  
Publications.
- Parkes, G. (ed.). (1987). *Heidegger and Asian Thought*. Honolulu: University of Hawaii  
Press.
- Parkes, G. (1996). Translator's preface. In May, R. (1996). *Heidegger's hidden sources:  
East Asian Influences on his Work*. London: Routledge.
- Partridge, C. (ed.). (2004). *New Religions: A guide, New Religious Movements, Sects  
and Alternative Spiritualities*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Patrick, K. C. (2004). Mind Your Body: Has Yoga Lost Its Spirit? *Dance Magazine*,  
March. 78, 3, 29.
- Pepper, D. (1991). *Communes and The Green Vision*. London: The Merlin Press.
- Phillimore, J. (1999). Health report Breathing easy: A new playful form of Yoga is  
helping children with asthma. In *Essentials. The Observer Magazine*. 3rd October.
- Pietroni, P. C. (1993). Complementary medicine – its place in the care of dying people.  
In Dickenson, D. and Johnson, M. (eds). *Death, Dying & Bereavement*. London:  
Sage Publication Ltd.
- Polkinghorne, D. E. (1988) *Narrative Knowing and the Human Sciences*, State  
University of New York Press, New York
- Polkinghorne, D. E. (1989) Phenomenological Research Methods. In Valle, R. S. and  
Halling, S. (eds). *Existential Phenomenological Perspectives in Psychology:  
Exploring the Breadth of Human Experience*. London: Plenum Press.
- Pollio, H. R., Henley, T. and Thompson, C. B. (1997). *The Phenomenology of Everyday  
Life*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press

- Puttick, E. (1997). *Women in New Religions: In Search of Community, Sexuality and Spiritual Power*. London: MacMillan Press.
- Puttick, E. (2004). The Human Potential Movement. In Partridge, C. (ed.). *The New Religions Guide: New Religious Movement, Sects and Alternative Spiritualism*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Ram Dass, Baba. (Alpert, R.). (1978). *Be Here Now*. New York: The Crown Publishing Group.
- Ram-Prasad, C. (2005). *Eastern Philosophy*. London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson.
- Rapport, F. and Wainwright, P. (2006). Phenomenology as a paradigm of movement. *Nursing Inquiry*. 13, 3, 228-236.
- Rapport, F. (ed.). (2004). *New Qualitative Methodologies in Health and Social Care Research*, London: Routledge.
- Rapport, N. (2002). Post-cultural anthropology: The ironization of values in a world of movement. In Amit, V. (ed.). *Realizing Community: Concepts, social relationships and sentiments*. London: Routledge.
- Resch, K-L., and Ernst, E. (1999). Research methodologies in complementary medicine: making sure it works. In Ernst, E. (ed.). *Complementary Medicine: an objective appraisal*. Oxford: Butterworth Heinemann.
- Rhodes, L. A. (1996). Studying Biomedicine as a Cultural System. In Sargent, C. F. and Johnson, T. M. (eds). *Medical Anthropology: Contemporary Theory and Method* (revised edition). London: Praeger.
- Riessman, C. K. (1993). Narrative Analysis, *Qualitative Research Methods Series 30*. London: A Sage University Paper.
- Ritzer, G. (1997). *Postmodern Social Theory*. London: The McGraw-Hill Companies.
- Ritzer, G. (1999). *Enchanting a Disenchanted World: Revolutionizing the Means of Consumption*. London: Pine Forge Press.
- Rosenthal, G. (ed.). (1998). *The Holocaust in three generations: families of victims and perpetrators of the Nazi regime*. London: Cassel.
- Rosenthal, G. (2004). Biographical Research. In Seale, C., Gobo, G., et al. (eds). *Qualitative Research Practice*. London: Sage Publications.
- Royal College of Nursing (2009). *Research ethics: RCN guidance for nurses*. <http://www.rcn.org.uk>. (29<sup>th</sup> June 2009).

- Rubel, A. J. and Hass, M. R. (1996). Ethnomedicine. In Sargent, C. F. and Johnson T. M. (eds). *Medical Anthropology: Contemporary Theory and Method* (revised edition). London: Praeger.
- Russell, M. (2006). *Husserl: A Guide for the Perplexed*. London: Continuum.
- Fukuyama, S. (2005) Middle Nishida Philosophy and The Ten Oxherding Pictures: A Study of the system of the universal and the self-conscious. Nihon University, *Graduate School of Social Science and Cultural Studies Annals*. 6, 303-314.
- Sackett, D. L. (1996). Evidence based medicine: what it is and what it isn't. *British Medical Journal*. 312, 13, 71-72.
- Saks, M. (1992). *Alternative Medicine in Britain*, Oxford: Clarendon Press.
- Saks, M. (ed.). (1995). *Professions and the public interest: Medical power, altruism and alternative medicine*. London: Routledge.
- Sangharakshita, Bikshu (2004). *Survey of Buddhism: Its Doctrines and Methods Through the Ages* (9<sup>th</sup> edition). London: Windhorn Publications.
- Sarbacker, S. R. (2008). The Numinous and Cessative in Modern Yoga. In Singleton, M. and Byrne, J. (eds). *Yoga in the Modern World: Contemporary Perspective*. London: Routledge.
- Sarukkai, S. (2002). Inside/outside: Merleau-Ponty/Yoga. *Philosophy East & West*. 52, 4, 459-478. Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press.
- Satchidananda, Sri Swami (1990). *Yoga Sutras of Patanjali* (revised edition). Originally published in 1978 as *Integral Yoga: The Yoga Sutras of Patanjali*. Yogaville, Virginia: Integral Yoga Publications.
- Scambler, G. and Higgs, P. (eds). (1998). *Modernity, Medicine and Health: Medical Sociology Towards 2000*. London: Routledge.
- Schure, M, B. Christopher, J., et al. (2008). Mind-Body Medicine and the Art of Self-Care: Teaching Mindfulness to Counselling Students Through Yoga, Meditation, and Qigong. *Journal of Counselling & Development*. 86, 1, 47-56.
- Schutze, F. (1983). Biographieforschung und narratives Interview, *Neue Praxis*. 3, 283-293.
- Searle, J. R. (1995). *The Construction of Social Reality*. London: Allen Lane, The Penguin Press.

- Shapiro, E. (1990). *Inner Conscious Relaxation: A Renaissance in Consciousness*. Shaftesbury: Element.
- Sharma, U. (1995). *Complementary Medicine Today: Practitioners and Patients* (revised edition). London: Routledge. First published in 1992.
- Shearer, A. (1982). *Effortless Being: The Yoga Sutra of Patanjali*. London: Mandala, Unwin Paperbacks.
- Silverman, D. (1993). *Interpreting Qualitative Data: Methods for Analyzing Talk, Text and Interaction*. London: Sage Publications.
- Simon, B. (ed.). (1990). *The Search for Enlightenment: The Working Class and Adult Education in the Twentieth Century*. London: Lawrence & Wishart.
- Sinari, R. (1965). The Method of Phenomenological Reduction and Yoga. *Philosophy East and West*. 15, 3/4, 217-228. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/1397061>. (22<sup>nd</sup> June 2008).
- Singleton, M. (2005). Salvation through Relaxation: Proprioceptive therapy and its Relationship to Yoga. *Journal of Contemporary Religion*. 20, 3, 289-304.
- Singleton, M. (2008). The Classical Reveries of Modern Yoga: Patanjali and Constructive Orientalism. In Singleton, M. and Byrne, J. (eds). *Yoga in the Modern World: Contemporary Perspective*. London: Routledge.
- Singleton, M. and Byrne, J. (2008). Introduction. In Singleton, M. and Byrne, J. (eds). *Yoga in the Modern World: Contemporary Perspective*. London: Routledge.
- Smith, A. D. (2003). *Husserl and the Cartesian Meditations*. London: Routledge.
- Smith, B. and Boudreau, L. (1986). *Yoga for a New Age: A Modern Approach to Hatha Yoga*. Seattle: Smith Production. Quoted in Michelis, E. (2004) *A History of Modern Yoga*. London: Continuum.
- Smith, B. and Smith, L. B. (1986). *Yoga For A New Age: A Modern Approach to Hatha Yoga*. Seattle: Smith Productions.
- Smith, B. R., (2008). "With Heat Even Iron Will Bend": Discipline and Authority in Ashtanga Yoga. In Singleton, M. and Byrne, J. (eds). *Yoga in the Modern World: Contemporary Perspective*. London: Routledge.
- Smith, D. W. (2005). Phenomenology. *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*. <http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/phenomenology/> (21<sup>st</sup> August 2007).

- Smith, J. A. (ed.). (2003). *Qualitative Psychology: A Practical Guide to Research Methods*. London: Sage Publications.
- Smith, M. J. (1998). *Social Science in Question*. London: Sage Publication with the Open University.
- Smith, M. B. (1999). Transcendence in Merleau-Ponty. In Olkowski, D. and Morley, J. (eds). *Merleau-Ponty: Interiority and Exteriority. Psychic Life and the World*. Albany: State University of New York Press.
- Spradley, J. P. (1979). *The Ethnographic Interview*. London: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich College Publications.
- Srinivas, K. R. (2007). Intellectual Property Rights and Traditional Knowledge: The Case of Yoga. *Economic & Political Weekly*. 47, 27-28, 2866-2871.
- Srivastava, S. (2005). What happens when spirit meets wallet? It's patently obvious. *Asia Times Online* (2<sup>nd</sup> July).  
[http://www.atimes.com/atimes/South\\_Asia/GG02Df02.html](http://www.atimes.com/atimes/South_Asia/GG02Df02.html). (18<sup>th</sup> January 2008).
- Steffy, J. (1977). Transmetaphysical thinking in Heidegger and Zen Buddhism. *Philosophy East and West*. 27, 3, 323-335.
- Stevick, E. L. (1971). An empirical investigation of the experience of anger. In Giorgi, A., Fisch, W. F. and Von Eckartsberg, E. (eds). *Duquesne studies in phenomenological psychology* 1. Pittsburgh: Duquesne university Press.
- Stiles, M. (2000). *Structural Yoga Therapy: Adapting to the Individual*. Maine: Samuel Weiser Inc.
- Stirk, J. (1988). *Structural Fitness: The essential guide to better body mechanics*. London: Elm Tree Books.
- Stone, J. and Katz, J. (2005). Can Complementary and Alternative Medicine be Classified? In Heller, T., et al. (eds). *Perspectives on Complementary and Alternative Medicine*. London: Routledge, in association with The Open University.
- Strauss, S. (2000). Locating Yoga: Ethnography and transnational practice. In Amit, V. (ed.) *Construction the field: Ethnographic fieldwork in the Contemporary world*. London: Routledge.
- Strauss, S. (2004). *Re-orientating Yoga, Expedition*. 46, 3, 29-34, University of Pennsylvania Museum.
- Strauss, S. (2005). *Positioning Yoga: Balancing Acts Across Cultures*. Oxford: Berg.

- Strauss, S. (2008). "Adapt, Adjust, Accommodate": the Production of Yoga in a Transnational World. In Singleton, M. and Byrne, J. (eds). *Yoga in the Modern World: Contemporary Perspective*. London: Routledge. First published in *History and Anthropology*. 13, 3, 231-251. First published in 2002.
- Stuckrad, K. V. (2005). *Western Esotericism: A Brief History of Secret Knowledge*. London: Equinox Publishing Limited.
- Sung, B. H., *et al.* (2000). Effectiveness of various relaxation techniques in lowering blood pressure associated with mental stress. *American Journal of Hypertension*. 13, 4, supplement, 185.
- Suzuki, D. T. (1963). *Outlines of Mahayana Buddhism*. London: Schocken Books Inc.
- Suzuki, D. T. (1949). *Essays in Zen Buddhism*. New York: Grove Press.
- Suzuki, D. T. (1935). *Manual of Zen Buddhism*. Buddha Dharma Education Association Inc. New York: Grove Press.
- Tacey, D. (2004). *The Spirituality Revolution: The emergence of contemporary spirituality*. London: Routledge.
- Tachikawa, M. (立川武蔵) (2008). ヨーガと浄土. ブディスト・セオロジー V、講談社 (*Yoga and Heaven: Buddhist theology*. Tokyo: Koudansha).
- Takasaki, N. (高崎直道) (1992). 唯識入門. 春秋社 (*Beginner's Yuishiki*. Tokyo: Shunjyuusha Publications).
- Takeda, S. (竹田青嗣) (1989). 現象学入門. 日本放送出版協会 (*Beginner's phenomenology*. Tokyo: Japan Broadcasting Corporation Publications).
- Tart, C. T. (1989). *Open Mind, Discriminating Mind: Reflections on Human Possibilities*. London: Harper & Row publishers.
- Tart, C. T. (ed.). (1990). *Altered State of Consciousness* (revised and updated). San Francisco: Harper & Row.
- Tells, S. and Desiraju, T. (1993). Automatic changes in Brahmakumaris Raja yoga meditation. *International Journal of Psychophysiology*. 15, 2, 147-152.
- Tells, S., *et al.* (1993) Alterations of auditory middle latency evoked potentials during yogic consciously regulated breathing and attentive state of mind. *International Journal of Psychophysiology*. 14, 3, 189-198.



- Tetsuka, T. (1996). An Hour with Heidegger. In May, R. (ed.). *Heidegger's hidden sources: East Asian Influences on his Work*. London: Routledge. Originally published in 1989 in German.
- The British Wheel of Yoga: <http://www.bwy.org.uk> (22<sup>nd</sup> April 2009).
- The NHS Directory (2006). *Practitioners of complementary medicine*. [www.nhsdirectory.org/default.aspx?page=practitioners](http://www.nhsdirectory.org/default.aspx?page=practitioners). (25<sup>th</sup> April 2010).
- Tönnies, F. (2001). *Community and Society*. East Lansing: Michigan State University Press. Original work was published in 1887.
- Tooley, G. A., et al. (2000). Acute increases in night-time plasma melatonin levels following a period of meditation. *Biological Psychology*. 53, 1, 69-78.
- Turner V. W. (1968). *The Drums of Affliction: A study of religious processes among the Ndembu of Zambia*. Oxford: Clarendon Press and I. A. I.
- Turner, V. W. (1969). *The Ritual Process*. London: Keegan and Paul.
- Turner, V. W. (1974). *Dramas, Fields and Metaphors*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press.
- Turner, V. W. (1982). *From Ritual to Theatre*. New York: Performing Art Journal Publications.
- Ueda, K., and Yanagida, S. (上田閑照, 柳田聖山) (1982) *十牛図*, 筑摩書房 (*The Ten Oxherding Pictures*. Tokyo: Chikumashobou Publications).
- Valle, R. (ed.). (1998). *Phenomenological Inquiry in Psychology: Existential and Transpersonal Dimensions*. London: Plenum Press.
- Valle, R. S. and Halling, S. (eds). (1989). *Existential- Phenomenological Perspectives in Psychology: Exploring the Breadth of Human Experience*. London: Plenum Press.
- Van der Veer, Phenomenology (2001). *Imperial Encounters: Religion and Modernity in India and Britain*. New Jersey: Princeton University Press.
- Van Gennep, A. (1960). *The Rites of Passage*. London: Routledge and Kegan Paul.
- Van Maanen, J. (1996). Ethnography. In Kuper, A. and Kuper, J. (eds). *The Social Science Encyclopedia* (2<sup>nd</sup> edition). London: Routledge.
- Van Kaam, A. (1969). *Existential foundation of psychology*. New York: Doubleday.
- Van Manen, M. (1990). *Researching Lived experience: Human Science for an Action Sensitive Pedagogy*. London: The State University of New York Press.
- Van Manen, M. (2002a). *Writing in the Dark: Phenomenological Studies in Interpretive Inquiry*. Ontario: The Althouse Press.

- Van Manen, M. (2002b). *Inquiry: Phenomenological Inquiry*.  
<http://www.phenomenologyonline.com.inquiry/1-7.html>. (10<sup>th</sup> March 2006).
- Varela, F. J., Thompson, E., and Rosch, E. (1993). *The Embodied Mind: Cognitive Science and Human Experiences*. London: MIT Press.
- Varela, F. J. and Hear, J. (eds). (1999). *The View From Within: First-person approaches to the study of consciousness*. Thorverton: Imprint Academic.
- Vera, F. M., Mazaneque, J. M. *et al.* (2009). Subjective Sleep Quality and hormonal modulation in long-term yoga practitioners. *Biological Psychology*. 81, 3, 164-8.
- Vincent, C. and Furnham, A. (1998). *Complementary Medicine: A Research Perspective*. Chichester: John Wiley & Sons.
- Vivekananda, Swami (1982[1896]). *Raja-Yoga*. Calcutta: Advaita Ashram.
- Von Eckartsberg, R. (1998). Introducing Existential-Phenomenological Psychology. In Valle, R. (ed.). *Phenomenological Inquiry in Psychology: Existential and Transpersonal Dimensions*. London: Plenum.
- Von Eckartsberg, R. and Valle, R. S. (1981). Heideggerian Thinking and the Eastern Mind. In von Eckartsberg, R. and Valle, R. S. (eds). *Metaphors of Consciousness*. 287-311. London: Plenum Press.
- Wall, P. (1999). *Pain: The Science of Suffering*. London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson.
- Washida, S. (鷲田清一) (1997). *現象学の視線：分散する理性*. 講談社 (*Gaze from phenomenology: decentralization of reason*. Tokyo: Kodansha).
- Watanuki, A. (綿本彰) (2004). *冥想ヨーガ入門*. 実業の日本社 (*Beginner's yoga meditation*. Tokyo: Jitsugyononihonsha publication).
- Watkins, A. (1997). *Mind-Body Medicine: A Clinician's Guide to Psychoneuroimmunology*. London: Churchill livingstone.
- Watsuji, T. (和辻哲郎) (1979). *風土：人間的考察*. 岩波書店 (*The Climate: a consideration of people*. Tokyo: Iwanami Publications).
- Watts, M. (2001). *Heidegger: A Beginner's Guide*. Abingdon: Hodder & Stoughton.
- Weber, M. (1991). *From Max Weber: Essays in Sociology* (translated, edited and with an introduction by H. H. Gerth and C. Wright Mills, with a New Preface by B. S. Turner). London: Routledge. Original work was published in 1948 in German.
- Weber, M. (1993). *The Sociology of Religion*. Boston: Beacon Press. Original work was published in 1922 in German.

- Weiner, D. K., Herr, K., *et al.* (eds). (2002). *A comprehensive guide to persistent pain in older people: an Interdisciplinary Guide for Treatment*. New York: Springer Publishing Company.
- Wengraf, T. (2001). *Qualitative Research Interviewing*. London: Sage Publications.
- Werner, K. (1987). *Yoga: Its Beginnings & Development*. Sleaford: A British Wheel of Yoga publications.
- Wicher, I. (1998). *The Integrity of the Yoga Darsana: A Reconsideration of Classical Yoga*. New York: State University of New York Press.
- Wilber, K. (1996). *The Spectrum Of Consciousness*. London: Quest Book.
- Wilber, K. (2000). *No Boundary: Eastern and Western Approaches to Personal Growth*. Colorado: Shambhala Publications.
- Wilber, K. (2004). *Integral Psychology: Consciousness, Spirit, Psychology, Therapy*. London: University of California Press.
- Williams, L. (2005). Complementary Therapies in Maternity Care. In Lee-Treweek, G., *et al.* (eds). *Perspectives on Complementary and Alternative Medicine: A Reader*. London: Routledge in association with The Open University.
- Wilson, S. J., *et al.* (eds). (2006 – 20010). *Spectrum: the magazine for the BWY members*. Sleaford: The BWY publications.
- Wiltz, T. (2005). Has Yoga lost its soul? *Health*, November, 54-56. New York: University Press.
- Wood, E. (1949) *Concentration: an approach to Meditation*. London: The Theosophical Publishing House.
- Wood, E. (1959). *Yoga*. Harmondsworth: Penguin Books.
- Woolery, A., Myers, H., *et al.* (2004), A Yoga Intervention for Young Adults with Elevated Symptoms of Depression. *Alternative Therapies in Health & Medicine*. 10, 2, 60-63.
- Worthington, V. (1982). *A History of Yoga*. London: Routledge & Kegan Paul.
- Wrathall, M. (2005). *How to Read Heidegger*. London: Granta Books.
- Yamashita, H. (山下博司) (2009). *ヨーガの思想*. 講談社 (*Philosophy of Yoga*. Tokyo: Kodansha).

- Yanagida, S. (柳田聖山) (1975). *禅思想：その原型をあらう*. 中央公論社 (*Zen philosophy: an investigation of its original form*. Tokyo: Cyuoukouronsha Publications).
- Yokoyama, K. (横山幸一) (2008). *十牛図入門：「新しい自分」への道*. 幻冬舎新書 (*The Ten Oxherding Pictures for beginners: the way to the 'renewed self'*. Tokyo: Gentousha-shinsyo).
- York, M. (2004). New Age Traditions. In Partridge, C. (ed.). *New Religions: A guide, New Religious Movements, Sects and Alternative Spiritualities*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Zahavi, D. (2008). *Subjectivity and Selfhood: Investigating the First-Person Perspective*. London: The MIT Press.

## Appendices

### Appendix 1: Permission letter from BWY for interviewing the members

August 25th 2006

Mrs Chizuko Hunt

59 Briarwood Drive  
Northwood  
Middx  
HA6 1PW

THE BRITISH WHEEL OF  
YOGA

Dear Chizuko

Thank you for sending me a copy of your previous correspondence with Chair Monica Burton. I confirm that you have permission to seek the information you need from BWY members in pursuit of your thesis.

Hopefully you would be able to let us know what your conclusions are when the time comes.

The none thing I am not sure about is how you are going to seek out the members you wish to speak to as our Central Office is very busy and would be unable to help you. Perhaps it would be better to approach the Regional Officer in the areas where you are working to ask for contacts.

You can email me on [chair@bwyt.org.uk](mailto:chair@bwyt.org.uk) if you have any further questions as this would be a great deal quicker.

Yours sincerely



Heather A Fleet  
Chair British Wheel of Yoga

25 George Street,  
Bristol,  
Lancashire  
RG14 7BL

0121 234880  
0121 661211  
www.bwyt.org

Sarah Kester  
Dr Tony Daniel MBBCh

Reg Charity No. 264955  
VAT Reg No. 947019711

WE ARE COMMITTED...  
to providing a positive and meaningful of yoga  
through education, study, training and practice

CCPI

SPORT ENGLAND  
Recognised by the Sports Council as the  
governing body for competitive sports

## Appendix 2: A copy of the participant's information sheet



### Participant Information sheet

I would like to invite you to participate in a research project.

I am carrying out research on Yoga for my PhD degree with De Montfort University. The working title of the project is "Yoga Practice in 21<sup>st</sup> Century Britain: the life narratives of practitioners".

Although the level of people's interest in Yoga is quite high, qualitative research in this area has been rare.

In the coming few months, I would like to interview some Yoga practitioners who belong to the British Wheel of Yoga.

If you would like to take part in my research and share your invaluable experience of Yoga with me, I would be most grateful. What I would like you to do most is talk to me about your life, including Yoga.

It is up to you to decide whether or not to take part.

If you decide to take part, you will be given this information sheet to keep, and be asked to sign a consent form.

Before you decide, it is important to understand why the research is being done and what it will involve. Please take the time to read the following information carefully, and ask me if there is anything that is not clear or if you would like more information.

The purpose of my study is to learn how Yoga practitioners practice Yoga in their lives, and how they think Yoga influences their life. Living in modern Western society throws us many questions: The way and the reasons we live, the meanings we give to our lives, how we construct our views toward our bodies, health, well being, spirituality and "the self".

I am going to interview up to 10 Yoga practitioners including yourself if you decide to take part. The interview will take about 1-2 hours.

During the interview, I will ask you to talk about any or all aspects of your life experiences, including Yoga. Your talk will be audio-tape-recorded, and will be transcribed by myself. I may also need to contact you again at a later date to clarify any points I am uncertain of after I have listened to the interview again.

If you would like to read your interview transcript, you will be given a copy. If you remember something you wish to add, or wish to retract what you said about something later on, you will have the opportunity to do so.

You are free to withdraw from participating in the project at any time and without giving a reason. If this is after the interview, the tape and transcript will be destroyed.

All research materials will remain confidential and securely locked away, and your identity will remain anonymous. At the end of my study, I will give you a copy of the summary of my findings. I intend to complete my interviews with all Yoga practitioners by the end of December 2006. The writing up of my thesis may take a further 12 months.

If you wish to complain about any aspect of this study, please contact my research supervisor, Dr Tina Harris by telephone (on 0116 2577804), via email: [tharris@dmu.ac.uk](mailto:tharris@dmu.ac.uk) or in writing at the address below.

If you are not certain about my work, a copy of a summary of my past research work, MSc dissertation "Yoga Therapy as a Complementary Medicine for Low-back-pain sufferers" carried out at the Yoga Biomedical Trust, is available on request.

With many thanks for your co-operation.

Chizuko Hunt

Faculty of Health and Life Sciences, Nursing and Midwifery and Mary Seacole Research Centre

Charles Booth Campus, Victoria Road, Leicester LE2 0HQ

Tel: 0116 2577804 • Fax: 0116 2577889 • Email: [seacole@dmu.ac.uk](mailto:seacole@dmu.ac.uk) / Website: [www.dmu.ac.uk/seacole](http://www.dmu.ac.uk/seacole)

### Appendix 3: A copy of the participant's consent form



Thank you for agreeing to take part in the research project 'Yoga practice in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century: the life narratives of the practitioners.' If you would read the consent form below and sign it, I would be grateful.

#### Consent Form

I \_\_\_\_\_ agree to take part in the research "Yoga Practice in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century: the life narratives of the practitioners", conducted by Chizuko Hunt. I consent to the following:

I shall be interviewed by Chizuko Hunt. ☐

I understand that this interview will be audio recorded and later transcribed to print, and the tape will be destroyed at the end of project. ☐

I shall be entitled to read my interview transcript if I wish to do so. ☐

The interviewer has informed me that my name will not be used in any published document and that any identifying factors will be changed in any research reports or other printed matter. My anonymity and confidentiality will be protected at all levels. ☐

I understand that I can withdraw from taking part in the project at any time. ☐

I understand that this interview is to be used for research purposes only and I have agreed to such use of the interview materials. ☐

Interviewee's signature \_\_\_\_\_

Printed name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Interviewer's signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

**Faculty of Health and Life Sciences, Nursing and Midwifery and Mary Seacole Research Centre**  
Charles Frears Campus, 266 London Road, Leicester LE2 1RQ.  
**Tel:** (0116) 201 3906 / **Fax:** (0116) 201 3805 / **Email:** seacole@dmu.ac.uk / **Website:** www.dmu.ac.uk/~seacole

## **Appendix 4: A copy of the interview guide**

### **Semi-structured Interview Guide No.**

**Date,**

#### **1. Interview Themes**

##### **(1) Life narrative**

Please tell me about your life starting from the time you were born. I will ask you some questions from time to time, but I will try not to disrupt you.

*The rest are semi-structured, free-flowing open-ended questions, and they are only loose guide lines.*

##### **(2) Yoga practice**

Please tell me about you and yoga.

(If the participant does not start talking about details, ask questions:

When did you start yoga practice?

How did it happen?

What made you want to continue?)

##### **(3) Yoga practice - health and well being**

Please tell me how yoga practice helps your health and well being.

##### **(4) Life crises and changing experiences**

Have you had any major life crises? Can you tell me about these occasions?

Have you had any life changing experiences? Can you describe them?

##### **(5) Yoga learning**

Do you go to a yoga teacher or a guru to learn more? If you do, please describe your learning?

##### **(6) Yoga teaching**

Do you teach yoga? Can you tell me about it? How do you feel about teaching yoga?

##### **(7) Family and friends.**

Please tell me about your family and friend?

##### **(8) Other complementary therapy.**

Do you practice any other complementary therapy or health regime?

##### **(9) Future**

Please tell me about your future plans. Which direction do you want to go in?

##### **(10) If you look back on your life so far, what are your thoughts/ feelings?**

##### **(11) Please tell me about the breath when you practice yoga?**

##### **(12) Who is your current teacher? Why do you like the class?**

##### **(13) Is there anything else you would like to tell me?**



## **Appendix 5: A copy of the participant's questionnaire**

1. Date,  
(anonymous)

2. Personal file (I would be grateful if you could answer these questions, but it is up to you)

What kind of yoga do you practice? Please describe in your own words?

---

---

---

How do you describe your way of practicing yoga is unique?

---

---

In what way has yoga influenced you?

---

---

---

Would you like to comment on my research?

---

---



## **Appendix 6: Some excerpts from interview diaries**

11. 10. 06      1.00 pm – 2.00 pm

Interview with C

She sent me an email the day before saying that she wanted our meeting at 1.00 pm instead of 2.00 pm because she wanted to visit her mother.

I rang her at night, and decided to visit her around 12.50 pm.

It was raining hard, and I arrived early, but she was delayed, and she came back from teaching at 1.00 pm. She lives in a comfortable-looking detached house with a small neat garden.

I was invited into the conservatory, and she made me a cup of tea.

When we were settled, I explained the procedure and gave her an information sheet.

As she was in a hurry to go out at 2.00 pm, I asked if she was OK with what I explained, and I asked her to sign the consent form, which she obliged.

I got out the tape recorder and tested it, then turned it on.

She appeared nervous at first, but relaxed later. Her talk flowed except when her mother rang.

When it ended, I asked her to fill in a questionnaire sheet.

I thanked her, and came away at 2.00 pm. I thought it was a good interview.

12. 10. 06      2.00 pm – 3.30 pm

Interview with P

As we had agreed 3 weeks ago, I visited her flat. I arrived almost 40 minutes early, so I waited by walking around nearby. I tried to ring her, but could not get through. It turned out that I had written one digit incorrectly in my memo. The building was blocked at the gate by workmen and I could not approach. At 2.00 pm, I found P waiting for me outside. We went around to the side door, and I followed her to the 7<sup>th</sup> floor.

When we settled down, I explained the procedure, and I gave her an information sheet. I asked her to sign the consent form, which she obliged. I tested the tape recorder, and switched it on.

She seemed a little nervous, and spoke fast, then became more relaxed and talked normally. I felt she was a very articulate and sincere person. When I switched the tape off, she made more tea and gave me cheese and biscuits. We enjoyed chatting, and catching up on some yoga news in general. I promised to send her some feedback sometime in the future.

13. 10. 06

A rang B on my behalf to ask her if she would like to be interviewed. She said that there would be a religious festival week next week, and a school half term holiday the week after that. She would be available during the first week of November, and was to be contacted later via email.

16. 10. 06

At M's Yoga class, I met J, and arranged to visit him on Thursday 19<sup>th</sup> at 11 am for an interview. M mentioned my research at the end of the class, and 5 people volunteered to be interviewed. I collected their telephone numbers to contact them sometime that week. My immediate feeling was that having 5 extra volunteers suddenly was too many, particularly when I felt data collection was nearing saturation. However, I also thought that the group of students might represent the silent majority of the BWY, and that as a group, they might offer further insight.

19. 10. 06

J's interview at 11.00 am at his home. I did not find immediately that there were any new major themes. I may find something later when I transcribe.

I sent 4 potential participants/volunteers emails asking to set a date for interviews. One person rang me, and I shall visit her home for an interview on Monday. I shall ring 2 more people tomorrow.

20. 10. 06

Talked to O, and he said I should talk to N first for an interview date, and then he would come around to her house. He would like to be interviewed together with N. I said that I was fine with the arrangement.

## **Appendix 7: Two examples of transcripts: Teacher B and Teacher E**

(Some parts are deleted to ensure confidentiality and anonymity)

### ***Interview: Teacher B***

Q: Please tell me about your life from the time you were born. I'll ask you some questions from time to time but I'll try not to disrupt you.

A: So you want my whole life really? Ok, well, certainly in my younger childhood, and I was talking about this recently to somebody, I feel I didn't wake up until I was about 11. About 11 before I woke up. Now, I mean of course I was awake and I was living, but it was almost like I was in a dream-world until I was 11. And I did very badly at school, very badly, because I was always in this dream, so I gradually got worse and worse, and went down and down when I was at school, until I came bottom of the class when I was in junior school. So that was quite a shock, that I just kept going down, and I remember I couldn't, I must have been about eight, I didn't know how to spell the word 'eye'. And the teacher made a big thing of this, because, I'd got to eight and I still couldn't spell 'eye', I was a very bad speller, and I'm a bit dyslexic, just a little bit and more when I was younger but now I've got over it.

When I went into the secondary modern school, they actually put me in the B form, so I'd been in the C, I'd been really down but they put me in a higher form so I was so pleased and so frightened I was going to go down. That's when I woke up I think, and I had to work really hard. But in the end I came top of the B and then I went into the A, and then I came top of the A in the third year. So after the third year at secondary school I came top of 3A. So from being so bad, that's why I felt I never woke up and then when I woke up and realized what life was about. Then I went on to do GCE and then after that I got \* GCEs, ...

And after I qualified I worked for 6 years.

We got married, and moved around. Then I had my first baby, and that's when I left for five years I stayed home with the babies, and when I went back to work they no longer wanted me to do \* and I've never done them since, and that's such a shame. Such a shame because it, I was so good at it, I know I was good at it. So, that was like the first time I had to readjust myself.

They said to me when I went back into the local authority, they said "Ok, now we want you to do health education." So, I did that for actually 12 years, about 12 years. The school service then became a health, a community service, and that took in like the special needs, the Downs syndrome, all those groups of people. So I went off to \* and trained to be a \*, came back with

that skill, and really I've been doing ever since. So, like I went from children to teaching, to adults, and I thought, if within the job, within the field I'm in, I've had so many changes, then I can do anything can't I? I can do anything at all. Anything. So that's when I became, a yoga teacher. I started yoga when my eldest son was 6 months old.

Q: Right. So, when was it?

A: And that was 1975, actually. And I wasn't working, I was still home with the children and it was something to do. I started doing it just, I started because I didn't know what yoga was. It could've been flower arranging, it could've been anything, I had no idea what it was. I didn't know it was exercise, or nothing about it. So when I saw yoga, I thought "I don't know what that is, I'm going to go and find out." So that's when I started. Because I tend to, I like to have different things. I don't like the same thing all the time. So I alternated, but I always kept the yoga going, and I never found yoga difficult because I think I'm naturally very supple and I was terrible at school at doing sports, jumping. We used to have standards which meant that you ran so fast or jumped so high or so far. I never got one standard, not one standard. And so I found actually yoga was something I could do, it wasn't competitive, and I'm not very competitive so I never had to compete with anybody in yoga class, and I found I could do it and I enjoyed it and I found I got more strong, more supple. So I did that really for quite a long time, and then it was really after when I did the teaching, I did that for 12 years, and got fed up with the same, saying the same thing. So I wanted to leave that but I actually didn't want to stop teaching, because I didn't ever find it easy, the teaching, I think it's a hard thing to do, so I thought it would be good for me to teach something, and that's when I decided I'd do yoga teaching because I'd done the yoga and I had lots of years by then of experience. I felt I was in a good position, I'd got the skills of teaching and standing up in front of people teaching, so that's when I did the yoga teaching.

Q: Right. So which year...?

A: That was 1992, I qualified as a yoga teacher.

Q: Who was your teacher? Do you remember?

A: No, no. I'm never very good with names anyway and it was always a different teacher and, I went to the local authority class, whatever was, whatever was going, whatever was close. I had a different teacher every year.

Q: Right. To get the diploma, you need a tutor, don't you?

A: Oh to do the diploma, yes, \* was my yoga teacher, yes. Yes, to teach me to teach yes.

Q: So after that, how did you go on?

A: Well straight away I started my own class because before I qualified to get practice I had my own class, which I'm still doing that class. And I still have people that have come for years and years. I've got one lady that's been coming ever since 1992 and she's still coming to my class.

Q: It's almost 15 years now, isn't it?

A: Yes, and they're like my friends. And they're lovely, they're like a whole load of friends, and still keep coming back and back. And I'm amazed they still want to come. Because my experience was I liked a different teacher because I've heard what you've got to say and now I want a different one. But they seem to keep coming back.

Q: Well they like you.

A: So I'm doing something right. And this one lady, who's been with me since 1992, she quite quickly said to me that people were saying to her "Was she doing exercise or something?" because she, they could see by the way she was standing, and the way she held herself and the way she walked, so very quickly it showed for her. And when she didn't come for a year, and came back she said it was like a warm blanket coming back into the class. Isn't that lovely? So, I started off doing one class, and I very quickly went up to 6 classes. I used to do 6 a week as well as my work. So I did a mixture, but with the local authority, the pay was very poor, and the work paid me better so I'm afraid I did do more work. But now I did 4 evenings a week, I kept the 4 evenings. Well maybe 3 evenings. Yeah, that's right, it was 3 evenings. And I did three for a long time, but again I got tired of going out in the evenings, and now I'm just doing 2 evenings a week. I think 3 was better, I think three, because like, for instance the boat posture I've been doing lately and finding it not so easy, and I think I've got a bit weaker, whereas if

I'm doing 3 classes I felt I could do everything still. I mean that's not a problem because if there's something I feel I've got weaker with, then I just do more of it at home, to try and get back that whatever it is and that's different at different times. And then, I became, I think because of the yoga, because of the meditation, the relaxation, I really enjoyed the meditation side, the visualization.

Q: Yes, I remember your mentioning that.

A: Yes, I really liked it, and in fact, when I was practicing my yoga class one day, I was practicing, I was lying in bed practicing what I was going to do, visualization of a walled garden and you go across the bridge and sat on a bench and the sun was on my face and I'm saying the words to myself lying in bed. And I saw a presence come round on my right hand side with my eyes closed, but I saw this presence come round. And the words came into my head "measure life by happiness, put into your life whatever makes you happy." And that was so powerful to me that I sat up in bed and wrote it down quickly because I thought I must remember this, this is important. And then I thought about that a lot and I thought what wise words really, that is the measure of our life, what makes us happy, and that we have the ability to put into our life whatever we want. We don't have to wait for somebody to give it to us, we can go out and get it for ourselves.

Q: That's very nice.

A: Isn't that lovely? And from then on, from then I did psychic development after that. Yes, and I loved that as well, I loved doing psychic development.

Q: Can you tell me more about it?

A: Yes, yes. Well the psychic development is working with the chakras, so it's a big link with yoga. You work with the chakras, the 7 main chakras, and bring energy from the base, magnetic energy up, and spiritual energy down, and you're working with...you work to push energy through the chakras so you bring energy up and down and push them through, so you're working on 2, 3, 4 being the heart, 5, the throat, 6 the crown chakra, the 3<sup>rd</sup> eye. And, the main ones for the psychic work are chakra 5 and 6, the throat and the throat is hearing, so if you want to hear, you work to expand and you imagine this expansion all around the throat, so behind you as well so its like this big circle of energy and I got that I could feel that like, it was like



somebody put a hand on my ear, it was like that sort of feeling, and it would go at any time. I'd be in the bank and suddenly I could feel the energy in my own ears, and the same with the brow. It would, like somebody's tapping, like tapping on my forehead. So I know when they're working, these chakras because I can actually feel them. I can feel the top of my head sometimes, going like somebody's tapping me, or the base. Yes. And I loved it, I absolutely loved it.

Q: How did you train to do it?

A: I went again to lots of teachers. I never had the same teacher for years. I had lots of different teachers, and we used to sit in a circle, so just a small number of maybe 8 or 10 people and you sit in a circle, and the leader talks you through bringing up, bringing down, bringing through, bringing, 2, 3, that's how it goes. And then you get like you see or hear something. And then you share and maybe we would, I'd get something for somebody else or maybe we'd all get the same thing, like bicycles maybe, might be a theme. So yes sitting in circle every week, I would go and...

Q: And you sort of visualize together?

A: It's all visualizing and it's using the like mind to bring movement into the body. And you think you're just imagining it, but actually it begins to work because you can, I know it's working because I can feel it. And when I was doing that I got, I would, for instance I was driving to work and I would get a voice in my head, I would hear things, and it's so quick that you have to really grab it or else you've missed it. It's very very quick.

Q: Is it something like serendipity? Some ideas come up in your mind.

A: I suppose it's akin really to like intuition maybe, yeah. But, I definitely would hear a voice, it was words not...it was actually words in my head. I mean the one time I was driving to work and in front, I was half-asleep and in front there was a car and there was a sticker on the car in front, so I'm just thinking "Oh I wonder what that sticker is?" And it was an anti-abortion sticker, and the voice in my head said, "What right do we have to choose for somebody else?" So the car was, the sticker was saying it's bad, but the voice said to me "What right do we have to choose?" And it was like a very angry voice, it was like "What right, do we have?", and again, it made me sit up. And I thought about that for days and I thought, not only abortion but

everything, what right does anybody have to choose what somebody else should do. That was quite amazing, and I loved that period, absolutely loved it, and when it finished, and I'm sorry it finished. But it was actually, it was psychically telling me to move to a different area. I got psychic again when I was meditating to do the counselling, so I was in meditation. I had a bad neck because of my work, and I'm always struggling with my neck, and, so I was sitting meditating and I'm asking "What can I do? Is there anything else I can do to help my neck?" And the words again came, and the words said Do counselling, move away from \* because that's what's hurting my neck. Move away from \*, do counselling, be like Mrs \*." Now Mrs \* was a \*, who was a counsellor and she'd impressed me with her insight, actually. So, again I went, "Oh my goodness, don't give me anymore jobs because I'm now a yoga teacher, I'm doing my \*, I've got my family, don't give me anymore jobs." But I thought "Well, alright then." I had a look at the Ace guide and the counselling course was a Wednesday night which was the night I did my psychic development. So I sort of in a way took out the psychic development and instead put in the counselling and then I kept my yoga classes, my three yoga classes in the evening. And that was 1995, I started to do the counselling. And I qualified in 1999 and I've been counselling ever since, and I love the counselling, again I really feel it's something I'm quite good at. I'm used to people, and I'm very comfortable. I think it's very useful to know how to respond, I feel that the counselling has helped me to deal better with them.

Q: So with your psychic training and your counselling, do you feel more about (people) without their talking in detail?

A: I think so, I think I do just know things about people, I think because I did the psychic, I somehow just know things about people, I sort of know what to say I think, to them. Very useful. And I think with the counselling as well, I think maybe some, I certainly don't hear words anymore, because I'm not training it, so I don't actually get those words anymore and I miss that, but I think it just gives me a little bit more understanding with people on that level and I feel that's where I'm supposed to be.

Q: So you're happy with what you have now?

A: Love it, yes. It's so varied.

Q: So you have 2 yoga classes and work and counselling so far.

A: And then the next thing I've just added, I do some work for a mother/daughter agency, and they said to me, she said to me, they also do this mediation, and she said to me "I know you like doing different things, would you like to do mediation. It pays well." So I thought "Oh, ok then." So I train now as a mediator, and what the mediation is very akin to the counselling, but when there's a conflict within work, like a manager and one of the workers that don't get on, and they're, they just can't get on, you go in and do the mediation, and we use the core mediation model, there's two of us, and we did two hours with the manager, two hours with the worker, and then we have 2 hours with a joint meeting when they come together, and that's the mediation which is the latest thing.

Q: It sounds very useful. So how often do you do it?

A: The mediation? Well I've only done one. I qualified last march, this year, so in 6 months I've only done one. I think they will ask me again, and I'm trying to see who else might give me a mediation job. I'm writing to different companies and to see what.

Q: I imagine there are lots of opportunities if people know you exist.

A: Yeah, yeah, if I can find a place. And I've written to a couple of agencies, and I'm going to write to the PCT, the Primary Care Trust, because it could be mediation, if the patient has complained, mediators can go in there and so I think I would, I would be okay on that one.

Q: How about doctors and patients or patient's family and GP? There are lots and lots of places.

A: Exactly, exactly. And this lady I did the mediation with, she said to me, she always has a headache at the end of the mediation, because it's quite intense. And you've got them, bickering at one another, and she said to me at the end, she said "I don't have a headache today", and she said 'it must be your calming influence'. So I thought "Yes she'll ask me again now."

Q: Ah, that sounds wonderful.

A: So that's my life, my working life really.

Q: Now. Please tell me about you and yoga again. When did you start yoga practice, what made you want to continue it?

A: Well I started in 1975, and I continued because it was something I could do, and it was easy for me and I found I could do it, I found I enjoyed it, I enjoyed the quiet of yoga as well. So yes, it was just something I could do, and I did the teaching because I wanted to teach something, and found that actually that's when I really started to learn, when I started to teach. Before that, you just follow the teacher and you don't really learn a lot I found.

Q: Please tell me how yoga practice helps your health and well being.

A: Ok, well certainly I find that for my bad neck that yoga has helped me tremendously with that, it makes me more aware of it. I worked out which postures I can do to help it, and I can keep it free and fairly painless. And I mean it stiffens up all the time, so I'm always doing stretching and the forward flight. I find it is the best for me. Do you know, when you're standing, hands behind your back and you go [demonstrates]. That one. I find that, I do it everyday, everyday. And everyday it goes "click". Everyday. Forward flight.

Q: Oh I'll remember that because I get stiff shoulders sometimes.

A: Yes, yes. And shoulder circling, and stretching the side, I'm always doing that, always doing that one. Side-stretching, and the neck.

Q: Have you had any major life crises?

A: Well I did have cancer. I suppose that's a life crisis isn't it? I could've died.

Q: You say it so casually.

A: I could've died, you know, people die, and the hospital wasn't that good at...they were very slow.

Q: \*\* Hospital?

A: No, this was \*\*\*. So I was, they were very very slow, I think I presented it about March and I didn't actually get the operation for 10 months, very bad, it was very bad. And I presented quite early, and they were, it was just, I couldn't get an appointment. So in fact it was when I did yoga and meditation that I realized I had a problem. I had, it was in the womb, and I had a mucus discharge, and that's when I presented because I said this isn't normal. But it was when, I only had pain really, not even pain but a discomfort, when I meditated, it's like when I got down to that very still level did I realize there was something going on in my body. Otherwise I didn't really have any pain, not until later on, but, in the early stages I had pain only slight pain when I meditated, because it was obviously when I meditated I just became more aware I think.

Q: It's near to Svadisthana chakra isn't it?

A: Yes, yes. And also when I was doing one or two postures, I'd get pain one side or the other, and I thought "It's not that bad because it's moving from side to side", but of course it was because the womb is in the middle.

Q: So, ... you are ok now?

A: Yes, I'm, they don't even want to see me now, I'm completely ...

Q: So did yoga help to recover in any way?

A: Yes, I think, the strange thing really was when I was, before I had my operation and in that time while I was waiting, when I knew that I was going to have it done, it was like I was outside myself looking in, and this was really quite weird because I was, like it wasn't me. This is my best friend who's got a problem but it wasn't me, and I was like on the ceiling looking down. I was outside myself.

Q: Did it happen when you were recovering?

A: No, before. When I was waiting for the operation. And so, my husband said, he couldn't believe how happy I was. It was like it wasn't me, it really was, I was looking down at myself. So I was concerned about this person because she was like my best friend but it wasn't me, and I had a very strong sense of that.

Q: So, how about after the operation?

A: And after the operation, they gave me a few exercises to do, and I think if I hadn't known about exercising I probably wouldn't have stuck at it actually, but I realized, in fact they didn't even give me any exercises, but a friend of mine who had gone to a private hospital, she gave me these exercises. But before she gave them to me, I mean it was painful underneath and I realized then that I've got to work these muscles. So, you know, the fact that I was a yoga teacher and I knew I'd got to work my muscles. And then things like, just getting the muscles back, I found the lying twist was quite a good one, so I did make a special effort when I was recovering to lie on the floor and do some strengthening sit-ups, maybe, yeah. I think it just, I think yoga just gives you a calmness, about things, like you cope better somehow and, you're going through these things but its ok, just feel that, it just gives you. In the end I just feel I'm living in a very calm place and things can be quite manic, but I'm still in my centre, I feel very centred and like it can't throw me. So it gives me a strength, I feel I've got this inner strength now that takes me through, yeah.

Q: Do you go to a yoga teacher or yoga guru to learn more? If you do, please describe your learning.

A: No, I don't. I feel I've got my inner yoga teacher that is, I work things out, I can work them out on my own and I prefer to do that. I like to use my own initiative and find out for myself. I don't want to do what somebody else tells me, sometimes I find that confuses me and makes it hard for me.

Q: So, do you go to occasional yoga seminars?

A: Well just the IST (In Service Training) day, yeah. I have to go to one a year so I just go to one. Otherwise I don't.

Q: You're happy?

A: I'm very happy because I work it out and I get the class to tell what they like, what they want to do, I think the counselling freed me with my yoga because before the counselling I felt I had to know everything, and when I did the counselling I realized I didn't have to know and that was very freeing for me, because now I say to people if they say "What should I do?" I say

“Well how does that feel when you do that?”, “Does that feel helpful do you think? What do you think?” and I found that very freeing. I didn’t have to be the expert anymore, I’m not the expert, I know a bit but, that really was quite freeing.

Q: So you teach two yoga classes.

A: Two a week yes.

Q: And how many people do you think in total?

A: I would say my Monday on average we have about 16, I work also for the \* (Sport Centre), in the club there, and that varies quite a lot. Maybe on average we get about 12 there. So what’s that, 12 and 16?

Q: Probably close to 30 people.

A: Maybe 30, yeah, on average a week.

Q: Can you tell me about teaching yoga? Obviously you are happy.

A: So what about teaching yoga?

Q: How do you feel? You are passionate about teaching, aren’t you? Do you need to lead people or just relax?

A: I’m very relaxed I think, I think I’m very laid back about it really. If they want to giggle, that’s ok, if they want to have a little chat, if we do partner work and they all start chatting I’m quite happy with that. I say to them that it’s quite good to talk to one another, that communication is an important part of life. If one starts giggling, I’ve had that where one, she just giggled all the time, and I say things like “Laughter is a wonderful medicine, let’s all join in!” I don’t want her to feel bad about it. So, then everybody joins in, then it’s ok so, I don’t think I’d say I was passionate about it. I don’t think yoga is the be and end all, I think we must do what we like, and if you like yoga then, then you’ll enjoy it and that’s fine and if you’d rather go and play tennis that’s fine too. So if somebody said “Oh well I couldn’t do it”, that’s fine, do

whatever you want to do. I have my little class, if anybody wants to come, they're welcome, if they don't that's ok too. So that's my sort of attitude really around it, I'm, I don't mind.

Q: Yes, people are so different, student-wise and teacher-wise.

A Yes, yes I know. And I don't like it when people say things to me like "You should be doing your yoga practice for half an hour", because I'll think I'll do it if I want to and if I don't want to I won't. And think the same for my students. If they want to do it, they feel free, if they don't want that's ok too. They must find their own level and do what they want to do.

Q: Yes, I agree with you. Please tell me about your family and friends.

A: Well my family don't do any yoga. But again, you see, that's ok. I wouldn't try to make them do yoga, it would drive them mad wouldn't it. But they're quite happy for me to lie on the floor, I often lie on the floor and do some yoga and they see what I'm doing while they're watching the television. So nobody tries to stop me and equally I don't try and make them do it either. In fact my younger son said "Oh that looks easy mum.", so I said "Ok come on then, we'll do it together, I'll show you how to do it." So he did it because he's a very fit young man, and he said, "Cor, Mum" he said, "that's much more difficult than it looks." So I must make it look easy I think.

Q: So, do you have a health regime? Do you do regular yoga practice at home?

A: No. No, I do what I want when I feel like it. I go by how I feel. So if I feel like doing it. The only thing I do is for my neck everyday because I have to do, well I feel it's a big help to me so I want to do it. So I do do my neck and the flight, the forward flight and the stretching but it's because I know it helps me and I want to do it. Other than that I just do again what I feel like, so I think I do bits quite often really but I wouldn't ever say I do a session. I rarely do a session but maybe at night, last thing at night I might lie on the floor and do a few twists maybe, a bridge, I find it helps me sleep, so I do do that sometimes, Or a shoulder stand, I like shoulder stands before I go to bed as well.

Q: Does it help?



A: I think so, it helps me sleep. I don't know why but I just feel maybe the blood is maybe more in my head and it's washing away, stresses that might be in your head and that you are worried about or thinking, it seems to wash that away somehow.

Q: Please tell me about future plans. Which direction do you want to go in?

A: Well I'm now \*, so I haven't got too much longer to go before I retire. ... But equally I would like to keep working because I've got all these skills now, and I would like to do less (work), I mean that's been my main job, and my main income, so I would like to do less of that. I would like to do more of the mediation because that's a new thing and I'd like to do more counselling because I love the counselling too. And I would like another yoga class because I think two is not quite enough for me, I think three is better. If I did three that would be better, yes.

Q: Is there anything else you'd like to tell me?

A: The only thing, the other thing about complementary therapies, was that when I was ill, when I had the cancer, I went to a lady who did, it was called electrocrystal healing. That's not quite right. Electromagnetic crystal healing.... electromagnetic I think it probably was, crystal therapy. And everybody I told about it seemed to think it was a load of nonsense, but it helped me tremendously, I was getting very weak, before I had my operation I was getting very weak and I was in a lot of pain at the end. And I mean the one night I remember, my son was going out with his friends, and all the friends were coming in the house, and I was in so much pain I couldn't move. I just couldn't move, and I thought "If anybody comes to speak to me, I can't move." So I really knew I was going downhill, waiting for appointments, and really going down. And that's why, in desperation I went to, I heard about this electrocrystal healing when I went to the psychic church, the spiritual church, so I went to see this lady. And what she did was put crystals, different crystals and they're, like, in a band and they pass an electric current through it, and she did lots of tests on me first to find where the imbalance of energy was, and I had one of these bands here and maybe one round my head, one here, and she adjusted machines to pass electric currents through these crystals, and she lent me a machine and I did it myself everyday. And I went from this terrible pain state to no pain. Yes, no pain. And I began to feel stronger. So I was getting weaker, and this helped me to be stronger. So much so that I thought I didn't need the operation. Yes, so I think that could've been a dangerous thing for me, because I'm thinking "Well I'm alright now, much better. The pain's gone. I'm feeling stronger

and fit.” I was fit as a fiddle, I was walking and running and, I was really feeling fit. Yeah. And when I had the operation, and they have to take out some of the lymph nodes to test, one of the lymph nodes was scarred and I thought it, I reckon that the cancer was coming out of the body, out of the womb, but because I was doing the crystal healing, it like, contained it, because they didn’t say one had got cancer in it, one was scarred, and I think it was scarred because it had had the cancer but the crystal healing had helped it like to go back, helped contain it. And people poo-poo it but it helped me a lot, I know it helped me a lot, and I used to go to her every week and she did all this, and you just sit there and relax and you can’t feel anything.

Q: Wow, that’s impressive isn’t it?

A: Yes, it really helped me. I haven’t spoken to this lady since, I thought I should phone her up, see if I can find if she’s still there or not and just tell her.

Q: Thank you very much for talking to me.

***Interview: Teacher E***

Q: Please tell me about your life starting from the time you were born.

A: I really don't remember very much at all about the house that I lived in. I was the second child, and there was a 10 year gap between my sister and myself, so she was 10 years older than me. I suppose really I had a pretty boring, a sort of uneventful childhood. And my earliest memory are being taken to a film, I believe it was Bambi, and crying a lot, and having to be taken home. I suppose in a way that was partly the first feeling I can really recount of my early childhood. Other than that, I don't really remember being frightened, or lonely, or sad. I just remember things very much being even keel. When I was 4, my parents moved to a modern house, I do remember there, I wanted to make friends with children in the street. And I wanted to go out to play with them, but I think my parents thought I was too young, so I was often seen looking out of the window, watching the bigger children play. But when I did go out with them, I can remember roaming around. And that time, there were a lot of apple orchards, and fruit trees and hop field. And I suppose from today's standard, I was at the age of 3 or 4 left to roam around with older children. But I can remember one significant thing is that I nearly got run over. I was crossing a road coming back with the children from one the outings to the apple orchard, and it couldn't have been a very busy road. But I remember running across the road and a car having to stop. And the friends that I was with, saying, "Why didn't you stay at the other side of the road?" And I can remember that as a fairly frightening experience. I started school at the age of 4 and a half. And I went on the bus with my older sister. And all I can remember is that there was a very roomy catholic convent school, with a very dark brown uniform. And my own memory of that school is just playing and mud-pies, I think, and not knowing it very much. And being ill when I had to do a dance, I was going to do a dance and, a concert for the parents, and I was feeling really ill, and I had to be taken home. And afterward, we moved to further toward the coast, and we lived in a cottage. So it was fairly rural place, and there were no other children. So, again, I can remember, having to make my own, ah, friendships having to really have an imaginary friend. Because, I didn't have a real friend, and I did a lot of imaginative play, I had an imaginative house, I would have a little house built in a shed at the bottom of garden, which was my house. So I think really that I had a quite imagination, simply by playing on my own, and making things, I was always making things. Paintings, cutting things out, but I never had very much in a way of material to use, because my parents didn't say do, now a days go out and buy a special paint or crayons or pencils, I had to use things around the home. So, I suppose in a way, I kind of grew up standing outside of

groups, looking in, wanting to join, but not knowing how. And something I remember from my primary school that we had a dressing up box. And I guess it was because I wanted to be popular, I took along a dress that I used to play at home, it was an old bride-maid dress, and I gave this to the school dressing up box. And afterward, I really regretted that I gave it away. And I cried every night, because I had given away this dress! to the school dressing up box. And the strange thing is as an adult, I used to think myself, "Why on earth, didn't I tell my mother!" And she could easily go along and told the teacher that I had a second thought. But that just didn't occur to me that I should tell my mother, anything that I should even tell her that she wouldn't even know I was crying at night, and I couldn't get to sleep. So, I think I was a child, I must have learned to cover my emotions, not to show emotional side of my side, even to my family. And, they are very different in the north, they're, I think my family are northerners, particularly bottle things up, they keep their emotions inside themselves, and they just get on with life. And I think, a little bit of that sort of hard flintiness is in me in a way, that I am completely the opposite of \*. ....And I got a lot of satisfaction out of doing those things at school. And in fact I went on, when I was 18 to study drama at a drama school. So I became a student at the central school of speech and drama. But in order to get a grant to study drama and acting, which was what I really wanted to do, I had to say I wanted to teach, because the only way I could get money from the local authority was if you were going to do something very practical with your training afterward. If I'd gone along to the education committee, and said, "Look, I would like some money to go and study acting." I think they would have said "No", because they didn't give money to give people who said to want to be actors. So, in fact, I was actually lucky to get grant because they only gave about 7 to actually study drama. So I think I was quite lucky to get where I got. And I had 3 lovely years, changing myself completely, becoming much more open, living in a city which I enjoyed, having lived, buried in the countryside for the first 18 years of my life. So, but I think basically, in essence, I didn't change. I appear to change over these three years. Finally right at the end of the course, I got married. So, that was another significant event really. After I got married, I taught for a while, in a school. So, my ideas of being an actress didn't ever actually materialize.

Q: You could have been Helen Mirren!

A: Oh, I don't think so. ...But, there we are. So, that came to nothing. But it was a very good experience for me.

So, after being married for 6 years, I had my first child which, it was a sort of my turning point in most of people's lives I suppose. Certainly it was a shock to realize that, once you had a child

you had a 24 hour responsibility, and I took it, we took it very, very seriously. We wanted life to be absolutely perfect, but a little baby that came on the scene, and being perfect never there was said. I think I decided then I would stay at home all the time and look after him. Particularly, as my husband was quite keen that I should do so. I think he felt that proper way to bring up a child is that to have mother and father, and mother who is there at home, which I didn't mind, because I didn't mind making things and doing things, and being asked to stay at home to look after a child was what I quite enjoyed. Because it brought out the creative side of me, and which I like, so I like that. And then 2 more children came along. By the 3<sup>rd</sup>, that was the time I felt that I wish I was really getting thin, and I needed really just to have a bit of time for myself.

And it was that point that I started yoga. And a neighbour of ours had gone to \* as a yoga teacher, and she had had a problem with her 2 children, and found that yoga is the thing which got her through, and helped her, and it allowed her when they were being difficult, to be able to walk away, and just reflect on life, and not to get so emotionally caught up with the problems of the day. So, I had one or two health problems by then, so I thought, "Perhaps yoga was the answer." I must have known somehow that yoga was not purely a physical exercise, but had a holistic, concept to it. And it was the mind and the body, and whatever else might be there, it was involved in it. Because I didn't go to yoga purely as a physical practice to keep flexible, I went because I felt that would fulfil some means of relaxing, of calming, of being calm, and of keeping my health better.

So that's really why I started. And then, since then, I now can't conceive of what life would have been like if I hadn't started yoga practice, really. Of course, you don't really know, do you? What, you know, what path, how you would have been, have you chosen a different path. Is that possible to say, and after while that yoga, that things you can't learn through your quiet practice, quiet time in yoga, things that become part of you, become parts of personality, it's very difficult to separate out, those things from what acquired through practice of yoga. But, I suppose that yoga practitioner is really, it must be about getting rid of that loneliness, it must be, because, we are born alone, we die alone, unless we are extremely lucky in finding life partners to help, that is obviously a help. All the rest, all the rest of things we do, I think, but a destruction from basic innate loneliness, which is common to all human beings, I'm sure. And some people chatter more in a different ways than others. And maybe, as a fairly lonesome sort of child, perhaps, I don't really know why, I decided that yoga is the thing, but, certainly after my first yoga class, I decided that I wanted more, and I've never stopped, practicing yoga. I've never been one of those people who done it for three years, then stopped, then, gone back to.

Because, I've always wanted it as much as I needed as air and water. I felt it was that essential to me really. I suppose perhaps that I was really lucky in that I started with \* who was a good teacher. And you had what I thought was a very good approach to practice yoga.

Q: That was your beginning of yoga practice. How did you progress after that?

A: Well, I really can't answer that. All I know is that I joined an adult education class, I went along once a week. And I went through the basic Hatha Yoga practices with relaxation, breathing, just virtually did it, and I think that is the thing you just have to do, you have to take it bona fide in a way, and important thing is just keep doing it. And that's what I did, I just did it every week, until, I suppose, after 10 years or so, people would say, "Oh I've got terrible back", or "You do Yoga, is there anything might help with my prostate problems", and I say, "Yes, I think we need to get a little bit more energy." You know, circulating around the pelvic, not knowing anything about it at all of course. But, thinking "Oh, yes, I'm sure that could help." And then I go along to \*, and say, "If he starts cross legged on the floor, would it help his prostate problems?", And she said, "You know what you ought to do, you ought join my group and become a teacher." And I had absolutely no idea of the philosophical side of yoga, and I had never read the Gita or the Upanishads, or Patanjali. I didn't even think I knew the names. But I knew that I wanted to know more. So, I really joined the teaching group not with the idea necessary for teaching, but just knowing more.

And we obviously started anatomy and physiology and, it just went on from there. I suppose, I don't really, I think my idea of yoga has changed over the years. I think I haven't realized earlier on just how much the kind of I was receiving had followed from that areas. I don't know the names of those areas. But, I suppose now maybe I borrow whole from people who have been influenced by their study of osteopathy, and Feldenkrais method of how we are and movement, and going back to the natural reflexes of the body, and how those may have changed, and how we have modified the natural reflexes of the body by the life's experiences, and how ways of yoga practice really trying to sort of strip away, and get back to the so called 'ideal' state that we are in when we arrived on this earth. But, I don't really know, in a way, I seem to be going back much more to the body, and through that going back to the body, I think I am learning more than following and looking at ideas of, for example, chakras. The prana systems of the body, those are not meaningful to me, unless, because I used to take on trust, they were things I was told I haven't yet come to the realization that maybe these things are, maybe they are not.

But all I can say is that all I have is the body and where I am going back to, whatever happens as a result of that, I see I just keep my eyes and ears and everything open, to the those things that happen. And I do have confusions, I suppose, because I read all those scriptures about doing this and others in-breath, and in-breath doing this, and I think that the way they are contrary to how the body behaves, contrary to the way the breath is. So, there is a little confusion in my mind. But I am gradually realizing now that the kind of yoga that we've built, the kind of yoga, I mean there is so much goes under, the general heading of 'yoga' that I do wonder about. And, it seems to me that there is enormously large umbrella that I don't think sometimes we can be all talking about the same thing. I don't know if you want to ask me any specific questions.

Q: And when did you start teaching?

A: I started teaching in 1990. And the first class I took was the one \* gave me, because she had been asked to retire. I don't quite know why, whether, I don't know how old she was, because we never do. But she had been asked to retire, and she very kindly gave me her class there while I was training. And I had another class teaching people who were very immobile at a day centre which was an adult education class. So, I had those two classes, as I was finishing my last year of training. And students started to teach me. I just continued in that way teaching, and I continued for many years, for just two or three classes.

And fairly recently, I started to widen the net a bit. Oh no I gave up, that right, \* changed the system of recruiting the teachers, and they changed the system completely, and put up the fees, and the students all walked out in protest to the fees going up enormously. And I started up on my own that time, and all defected, and came over and said, "You start a class and we will come to you", that I did, and I still teach those ladies, 15 years later.

Q: So, it's not with Adult Education you teach now, it's somewhere else.

A: I just teach privately now. I just started up my own class, and because the students were so disgruntled. We have to all apply for our own jobs, we didn't like the way the system was going, so we got out of the system. And since then, I just taught same group of people, and they brought their friends and neighbours along, so, I never advertised. And, both of the ladies I teach now, different time I teach in the evenings. But, I don't really like teaching evenings.

Because, I like to be at home and I like to cook and eat in the evening. Not to go out. So, I think that probably brings me up to date with teaching.

Q: You did a remedial course, didn't you?

A: I did do. Yes, I did do. But it's all remedial. But everything you do is, to my way of thinking is in yoga, Hatha practice is remedial. Because you place your foot on the floor, you look to see if you balanced to see you foot allowing your arch to drop to see the floor, lifting up, you know, your inner ankle is dropping. Then you work on your feet, to open the hip joints out from inside. So I really think, the whole thing is remedial. But with people who are very immobile, are really have to go right back to the breath. And in all yoga practice really is the breath, that is the basis of it all. And the breath is the key to the emotions of the lungs. And it's that the relationship between the breath and the body we can't separate, which we have separated, but we shouldn't. We need to, to work as a unity really.

Q: Can I just go back to the remedial course? You went to Ickwellbury <sup>1</sup>, didn't you?

A: I went to Ickwellbury. And I did rather a bad course for three weekends. I'm sorry to say that, but it was a bad course. It was a very short course which gave you a certificate, say that you could teach part one of their certificate, but, in fact I can't say I learned a great deal to be honest. I was given \*'s notes, all of which were about breath ultimately, which I agreed with. But, I must admit I didn't find it terribly useful in terms of, in practical terms of what, how you would help people. The way I find in the end to help people was to keep going back to here too, instead of saying how to place your foot on the ground, you would have to go back and think "How can I solve this problem with foot?" or, "How can I get them to move?" or, "How can I get them breathe out in order to get them breathe in?", "How can I get them to breathe out?", in fact it was really just my own questioning of my own yoga knowledge really. I think that helped, that I can't think in all honesty that Ickwellbury posed anything.

Q: Was it a theoretical course?

A: It was to the extent that you have to write, I think you have to write papers, but, I am very, very vague about it. I think you did. You had to write some essays. The course I was on, there were three other people, I think, or four other people, four of us I think on the course. And they



were not fully prepared for us at all. And they were kind of, “Oh, yes, you are here this weekend, and who we’ve got available.” And it was a little bit, things were a little bit like that. Ah, so, really not so useful. I learned much more in a day from people like \* which is relevant to anybody whatever there. I mean because just someone can’t move an arm, so what! They can still practice yoga. And I really didn’t like the way they taught breath, I thought it was really mechanical. You know lifting an arm with an in-breath, and down with an out-breath. I don’t teach, I’ve changed my way of looking at the breath, because breath is much more individual, is much more subtle, and it shouldn’t be regimented. I should leave people more freedom.

Q: So, when did you start learning from \*? Was it while you were with \*?

A: No, \* retired, gave up her class. She gave up all the adult education classes, because she had to, because of her age. Because they wouldn’t insure her, they would no longer allow to insure her. So, she gave up all her adult education. When she gave up her adult education, we said, “Oh, where can we go now?” I would be like that but she.

But, somewhere along the line, I went along to \*. And I practiced that kind of yoga, and I thought, “This is it!” “This is it!”, because the first few sessions were the time \* was working then. He was very much into listening, looking at breath, and feeling breath, and nobody ever mentioned to me feeling yoga, how do you, how does it feel, where do you feel movement. It was never based on sensory experience. It was be aware of, how do you feel, “Ok, breathe in, breathe out, where do you feel you are letting it into your body? Can anything happen? When do you feel anything happen, when you breathe out, when you interrupt your breath? And beside all that, there was this idea that I always knew from \*’s notes and \*’s lessons that you have to try and free breathing mechanism. And I knew that if you do twist you’ll free the backbend mechanism. I knew all the physical things, but I didn’t quite appreciate the subtleties for that, and how the diaphragm moves and how when you are upside down, the diaphragm does this, and when you are in a different position, diaphragm does, it was very basic anatomy and physiology. I’ve been able to learn much more subtle things about the great body are. From them, from their teachers, whoever, they are, I know they teach themselves, equally basically Vanda Scaravelli, but they are all kind of, in a way, they used Vanda Scaravelli as a spring board. Because all of those teachers, I don’t know about \*, but \* and \*, all Iyengar trained, and all got injuries, some kind or other. Yes, through their yoga. And they all, because their yoga training I suppose decided to become osteopath. And when they are osteopath, they

---

<sup>1</sup> Ickwellbury was a remedial yoga centre, which is now defunct.

went to Vanda Scaravelli, and realized how yoga needs to be changed, and about how, maybe, Iyengar style was not very really appropriate.

Q: Vanda Scaravelli was an Iyengar teacher, wasn't she?

A: She was. But she went off to do her own thing. Yes, I mean she was quite elderly by the time they came to Vanda Scaravelli, she must have been in her 80s. Now she has learned from Iyengar when she was in her 40s, she was younger.

Q: In her book, she wrote more spiritual things, didn't she?

A: Absolutely. Yes it is. I didn't know this, but Mr Iyengar was brought up very, very strictly. And he was used as, by Krishnamacharya, was that his uncle? He used him as he obviously saw him as a very good potential when he was a small boy. And he trained him extremely strictly, and he could do all these gymnastic poses. And I saw his DVD, Iyengar and Krishnamacharya only last week, a few weeks ago, and Iyengar was doing no standing postures at all, you know, things like one leg practice, very supple poses. He had learned through being very strictly disciplined, you know, the way the gymnasts used to be strictly disciplined and probably they still are, places like China and Russians used to treat the little gymnasts. He had been brought up like that. So, he had actually forced it, partly the body forced really.

Q: Krishnamacharya brought his son up later on in a different way.

A: Desikachar, yes. It is very different. It is interesting, isn't it? How very different they were.

Q: Can you describe about the yoga classes you go to? Who is the main teacher?

A: \*. So I started going to them and learning really more about, about the body system in particular, but also, experiencing as well. I suppose really it was \* who lifted the blind if you like, and brought me into this idea that it was a sensory thing, and that you need to feel yoga will do. I've never really got into that form, and that was that point that yoga changed for me, and became something different, and much freer. It was fairly disciplined, I feel that with \*, and dare I say it, but a little bit rigid.

Q: So, you go to \*, \*, and \*, whichever a course is available.

A: That's right. Yes, I like those very much. And in fact sometimes, I go to \* for a day, if he is doing anatomy and physiology.

Q: It's a long way.

A: Well, it's not that far really. But, I go on a train. And, I've been to \*'s as well, \*'s day as well. I would go more, but it's a whole day.

Q: Do they live nearby?

A: They all live in \* except \* who lives, nearer to \*, but, a good place to go. They are good people, and they are always interesting, although they do a much more limited range of postures, in some ways. They have the extensions, dog pose, a head-down, they are very keen on pigeon pose, flexibility.

Q: Pigeon pose?

A: (She demonstrates) You thrust your chest like a breast of pigeon bird. You know. You just go as far as you can. They like that one, and head stand, they are keen on shoulder stand, and always the preparations poses. So, it's not a soft option. Many people think "Oh, Scaravelli, all you do is floaty soft stuff", but it is not. It's stronger than anything else which you might do.

Q: They are all men, aren't they? Men usually like stronger postures.

A: Maybe, well yes, maybe they do, I don't know. But they are really about, I suppose in a way they are borrowed from Pilates, say borrowed, but they used the ideas borrowed from Pilates, encouraging strong internal muscles, strong core whilst keeping large outer muscles' body soft. So, nothing is done with stiff straight under no poses where you do this, because you are making yourself rigid, and you affect the breath. If you stiffen your body, you don't breathe, you don't breathe.

Q: Please tell me how yoga practice helps your health and well being?

A: Health and well being. Well, I think, if I can keep certain degree of flexibility, I can keep active, and if I can keep active, I feel more energetic, I suppose. You know I can keep doing things that itself gives energy. I am not so in need of quiet moments that I needed once upon a time. ....I don't, you know, feel that I must go and shut myself off and be very quiet for a moment or two. I have, what I am saying is that I have more reflective time during my day now than I used to have. How does it help? I think probably, if I get irritated or annoyed, I am more able to stand back from the situation, perhaps. And just breathe or, well I finally don't need to do that any more, I don't know. I know that, probably I breathe differently, I don't know. But I know that to increase your energy is to breathe properly. And if you feel if you've been sitting down all day, and you haven't moved, then the best thing you can do is perhaps just even lie down and breathe, and just quietly breathe out, and just spend a quiet few moment, with your breath. You don't really need to do extremely wide legged poses in order to keep healthy, and keep balanced. You don't really need to do extreme practice. Do it if you like it, do it and it gives you energy. But I do believe that more yoga you do, more energetic you get. I do believe that.

Q: Have you had any major life crises? Can you tell me about these occasions?

A: Major life crises, well I suppose, the only one I had really was after, I didn't mention it, did I, when I was first married, I got infected tonsils, and infected tonsils caused a kind of form of arthritis come into my joints, and I couldn't walk. It's started from the balls of my feet, my knees, a little bit of my hands, my elbows, and I ended up in a hospital about three months. And I had my tonsils removed at the end of three months. And subsequently, I've sort of been OK. But they say it was the result of my tonsils getting infected, I don't know, but I certainly I haven't had anything like that ever since, no joints pain, or problem like that. But I took penicillin for a long long time afterward, and I took aspirin as well for a while. But I'm quite anti-drug, I don't like taking patient medicines at all. Fortunately, I have been extremely lucky. I haven't had to, I haven't had such a many health problems, I am lucky I suppose. Because of yoga? It might well be. But I don't know. I can't say, can I? But I have a great suspicion that it is to do with my yoga practice. But you see that poses into question that how much yoga practice you do, and I think, you know the script, the writing says that yoga comes and goes, and it dies. If you, I know it is, if I am lazy such as I might be, when I last done my classes in July, and I know I've got 4 weeks of August where I'm not teaching. I would, I quite see, I could go slightly sluggish during that time, a little bit withdrawn, a little bit into myself. Because basically, I'm a life's introvert, I'm not an extrovert. Yoga makes me feel open to

people, to want to engage with people, to want to engage with life more. Otherwise I could very easily become a hermit. Very easily, because I like my own company, I'm satisfied whether I should be or not, I'm satisfied with my own company.

Q: Have you had any life changing experiences?

A: Well, only children, those are only major life changing experiences really.

(Turn over the tape)

And what you think may, only the children really, that all I can say. And I suppose the birth of my grandchildren really.

Q: Do you go to a particular yoga teacher or teachers to learn more? Would you like to talk about them?

A: Yes. Those are the people I go on the regular basis partly because they are available to me. I also go to the British Wheel of Yoga teaching days. But to be quite honest, a lot of them, I don't want to go to, and I don't enjoy when I go. Except \*, I like her very much. I think she does it in a very holistic way, and she works with the people who are ill, doesn't she, cancer. She had a cancer. I like her approach. I must say, if I get the people who talk to me about mudras (seals) and Bandhas (locks), I think, "Well, ok, you know, so what?" I don't know. I mean, if people tell me to do this with my fingers, or this with my hands, and that will correct ear problems, do you have a book about it, yes, hasta mudras, maybe there is something in it. But life is very short to discover, to know categorically whether, because, if you are thinking too much about how to change your problems, it isn't just one approach, is it, you are going to take. Your behaviour is going to be changed, modified in other way surely. So, I think it's a sort of multi-pronged approach really makes changes.

Q: Can you tell me about your experience of teaching yoga? How do you feel about it?

A: Well, I teach yoga to this particular group of people, some of whom I have known quite a long, long time. I enjoy it very much. I don't know quite why they come to me, possibly because I'm someone who is about their age, and perhaps, they feel we have a similar life situation in common. Although sometimes, when they meet, and chatting before the class, I

think “Oh, I want to run away”, because they are talking about doctor’s appointments, and hospitals, and clinics, things that go wrong. Maybe they are slightly older than me, and then sadly, some of them become widowed, and I feel, I can’t really contribute, I can’t really help them only this much, because they are only doing my yoga, that all I am qualified to do, I am not qualified to do any counselling or anything like that. All I’m going to do, all I’m going to do is that just give them an hour and a half, where they can come along and just do what they like within what I suggest. They are free, you know, within what I suggest might be useful to them helpful to them. I suppose basically I do basically like to try to be helpful to people. And if people tell me either what they are doing, they enjoy and is helpful, then that itself is the sign that makes you want to continue. But, having said that, people still come, and their joints deteriorate, and sometimes I do wonder “Is that because, well, is that because they’ve done yoga in a particular way? Is it partly my fault?” And I say it to myself “How can it be possibly my fault.” Because they come here, for one and a half hours, once a week, and then they go on a three weeks holiday, and come back. So their experience of yoga is in very small bites, if you like. And you know, my ego is so big that what I do is going to affect them that much, not really. I don’t think so. So I enjoy teaching people.

Q: Do you have yoga friends?

A: Well, I suppose in a way, I do. But I don’t see them very often. And when, I’m quite frankly, I’m in groups when people practice yoga, yoga teachers, at the moment the group I’m in now, I do like them. Because I feel those people are fairly practical, their feet are on the ground, and they are not somewhere up in the cloud in cuckoo-land. And also I find some yoga people are, must have a very different life styles, they are always a sort of monks. I don’t feel that. I don’t feel the need to get up at 6 in the morning to practice my yoga, because I feel I am taking yoga practice with me throughout what I do during the course of my day.

Q: The British Wheel of Yoga people basically don’t have gurus, do they?

A: I don’t really believe in gurus, because I don’t really believe that is the real answer. I think you should try things for yourself, and not to take somebody’s words. Particularly something that there is no proof, I mean what is proof, ok, what is proof, but certainly believe you should try and test things for your self rather than take in the words of somebody as being “The Truth” with Capital letters. I don’t really think it is right to follow like a sheep. I am not saying that you

don't listen to them with respect. But you also ought to listen to other people with respect and make or try to, with your best of ability to make up your own mind.

Q: Yes, there was a controversy about having guru in BWY at one time in the past.

A: It's escaped me. I don't need a guru. But, \* pays respect to her guru, doesn't she? If you look in her books, she got homage to some woman, Swami, somebody. I wish they wouldn't change their names, why, why they have to call themselves, swami something. I just cannot buy into that. To be honest, I think it is ridiculous. Because it is you are just plucking what you want from different cultural back ground, which is very relevant maybe in India, or it was maybe very relevant 2 or 3 hundreds years ago. But, I mean the world has moved on a bit. And what's wrong with change? Why are people so afraid to change? Change is around us, it is a part of us, it is a necessity. For change, you don't have to throw away all good values, good old values, does it? I can't get head around that, I think it, I mean, it's the heart of the society which is not what I don't want live in. I don't want to live in the society where people tell people what should think and feel.

Q: Please tell me about your future plans. Which direction do you want to go in?

A: Now that is a very interesting question. Because, I don't think about future directions at all. I don't think it at all. I don't know. Maybe, to do with my age, I mean I'm not ambitious for any...I don't want anything. Luckily I don't materially need to think about future direction. I really don't think about it to be honest. I just enjoy the day, each day as they come, I don't think about the future. I mean if I were to think about the future, maybe I would think about the idealized future, which I know is never going to be a reality, because ideally if I had a real choice, I would like to go and live near the sea side, or in the country. But, I know it will never going to happen. So that is not an option really, for many reasons. So no, I don't think that.

Q: When you look back on your life so far, what are thoughts or feelings?

A: What are my feelings? Maybe, that last few years, I have been marking time, not doing enough with my time, in ways perhaps that I could. What those ways are, I don't know, maybe, I haven't been productive enough, maybe because my children are grown up and gone. I suppose in a way, I couldn't manage my time better. That is my only regret that not managing

my time sufficiently well to be productive, maybe I allowed others to take my time away from me.

Q: So, when you look back on your life so far, how do you reflect upon it?

A: I feel very lucky, I feel extremely lucky that I had good parents, parents who loved me. When you hear the stories about people around you, you think how very fortunate you are. I think in my life I have been unappreciative for people who have been very good to me, and I feel a little bit guilty that I didn't show them how small affection really.

Q: Thank you very much for giving me your time and talking to me.



## **Appendix 8: The BWY Diploma teacher training course syllabus. (Currently under review)**



### **BRITISH WHEEL OF YOGA Teachers' Diploma Course in Four Units**

- The system for assessing students on the British Wheel of Yoga Teachers' Diploma Course is set out in the attached papers as four units, testing significant elements in the syllabus.
- After completing the Course students may take additional modules to increase their knowledge, or specialise in specific areas.
- The Course is set out as separate Units and each will be marked at specific stages throughout the Course. However, the Course Material is cumulative by nature and some work for the later units will begin at the commencement of the Course. For example, the professional background of teaching and the theory and practice of lesson planning will need to be covered in Units 1 & 2 to enable students to begin teaching and prepare for observations and teaching practices.
- Each Unit is comprised of a number of Elements which have been broken down into key Areas of Knowledge, and which include aspects from different areas of the Course, reflecting the integrated nature of the subject.
- The content of each Unit may be taught by the Course Tutor in any preferred order.
- Assessment of these Areas of Knowledge and associated skills will take several forms.
- The Course Tutor must complete an Assessment Report for each Unit, which will be passed to the External Verifier.

Units 1 & 4 will be verified by the External Verifier during a visit to the Course.  
Units 2 & 3 will be sent by post to the External Verifier.

#### **Written Work**

The Key Areas that form part of a written project will require full answers, ranging from tick boxes, to one or two paragraphs, or in some cases, two or three pages. Written work should ideally be brief, crisp, clear and precise. However, students wishing to research a topic and writing at greater length should not be discouraged.

The aim of the written work is to develop greater understanding of the subject by the student, to provide a means of assessment whereby we can be sure that the syllabus has been covered and to show that the student has an adequate understanding of the Course material and has shown competence and safety in teaching.

Written Course Work and Student Presentations must show the practical application of the fundamental principles covered during tutoring, rather than mere definitions from books. It is understanding the inter-relationship of those principles and their practical application which gives the teacher a firm platform from which to work.

#### **Presentations**

Student presentations should include a variety of teaching aids, which will be listed on the Assessment Report that is forwarded to the External Verifier.

#### **Teaching Practices**

Teaching practices within the peer group will be assessed by the Tutor.  
The External Observation of Teaching Practices will be by a BWY Qualified/Accredited Teacher.  
The External Final Class Assessment will be observed by a DCT other than the Course Tutor.

## **Asana**

DCTs will be expected to cover all the Asanas on the Syllabus during the Course. The Asanas have been allocated to a particular Unit.

Tutors may teach any Asana sooner than suggested, but not later, to ensure that all the Asanas have been covered by a Student who moves from one Course to another after completing a Unit.

## **Notes to Course Tutors**

1. It is essential that Courses with more than 8-10 students should add supplementary hours to the Course. Probably 3 hrs per student is a realistic figure. These hours could be added to extend each of the modules as appropriate to the size of the course.
2. A minimum of nine months is given for completion of Unit 1. Therefore, it is recommended that the presentations on Nutrition OR Anatomy and Physiology start in the second or third month, dependent upon the number of students in the group. Early topics could be on the digestive system and the basic components of food, building up over the months to more complex issues. A small number of Talks may be given in one 4 - 5 hour session. Two or three per meeting is probably appropriate. Subjects for the talks will need to be negotiated in the first couple of meetings.
3. The Basic Breathing and Relaxation Practice could be spread out in a similar way during the last four meetings of the nine months allocated to Unit 1. Four practices spread throughout each day for a group of 16 students may be appropriate.
4. The Set Books will need to be introduced at the beginning of the Course in order to facilitate the work on Nutrition and to underpin the spiritual aspects of Yoga. Study of these books needs to continue throughout the Course in order that the material for Unit 3 is properly assimilated.
5. Unit 4 includes an element (P.4.1) in which students demonstrate their ability to teach a full range of postures. This can be assessed in a variety of ways, including micro-teaching practices and full teaching practices to the peer group, throughout the Course, and should not be left until the final six months.
6. Professional Theory and Lesson Planning must start in Unit 1 to allow time for students' development and practice in these areas.
7. The Course Tutor should be seen as the assessor for all written work. Student Profile Booklet entries should not be made until the Tutor is satisfied with the standard of the work.
8. The units will need to be completed within a specified timescale. Whilst allowing for individual flexibility, it is suggested that the basis for the Course be 2.5 to 3 years of Tutor/Student contact time split, perhaps, as follows, depending on the number of student presentations to be included :-

Unit 1 - 9 to 12 months

Unit 2 - 9 to 12 months

Unit 3 - 6 months

Unit 4 - 6 months

## **BRITISH WHEEL OF YOGA TEACHER'S DIPLOMA COURSE**

### **The Four Units and Key Areas of Knowledge**

All work shall be Tutor Assessed prior to External Verification

#### **Unit 1**

Anatomy & Physiology related to Yoga Practice, Stress & Relaxation, Nutrition, Basic Breathing and the Setting up of a Yoga Class

##### **Externally Verified Written Work**

- W.1.1A The Skeletal System
- W.1.1.B The Muscular System
- W.1.1.C The Cardio-vascular System
- W.1.1.D The Respiratory System
- W.1.1.E The Kinesiology of Yoga Postures
- W.1.2 Precautions and Prohibitions
- W.1.3 Stress and the Autonomic Nervous System
- W.1.4 Basic Breathing Techniques
- W.1.5 Teaching Relaxation

##### **Externally Verified Practical Work**

- P.1.1 Nutrition OR A & P Presentation
- P.1.2 Setting up a Yoga class
- P.1.3 Basic Breathing and Relaxation Teaching Practice

#### **Unit 2**

The Hathayogapradipika, Prana, Pranayama, Mudras, Bandhas, Chakras and Observation and Analysis in teaching.

##### **Externally Verified Written Work**

- W.2.1 Theory of Prana / Energy
- W.2.2 The Hathayogapradipika
- W.2.3 Pranayama
- W.2.4 Mudra and Bandha
- W.2.5 Teaching Pranayama
- W.2.6 Observation and Analysis in Teaching

##### **Externally Verified Practical Work**

- P.2.1 Pranayama, Kriya, Mudra and Bandha Teaching Practice
- P.2.2 Personal Practice of Pranayama, Mudra and Bandha

##### **Externally Assessed Work**

- TP.1 First Recorded Teaching Practice

#### **Unit 3**

Yoga Philosophy, Concentration, Meditation, Mantra, and the issues of Health and Safety in Teaching and First Aid.

##### **Externally Verified Written Work**

- W.3.1 Vedanta Philosophy
- W.3.2 The Yoga Sutras of Patanjali
- W.3.3 Different Approaches to Meditation
- W.3.4 Teaching Concentration and Meditation
- W.3.5 Mantra

##### **Externally Verified Practical Work**

- P.3.1 The Upanishads and Bhagavad Gita / Professional Practice
- P.3.2 Meditation / Professional Practice
- P.3.3 Safety in the Yoga Class

##### **Externally Assessed Work**

- TP.2 Second Recorded Teaching Practice

#### **Unit 4**

Professional Studies and Practical Aspects of Teaching Yoga Postures.

##### **Externally Verified Written Work**

- W.4.1 The purpose and preparation of Asana
- W.4.2 Teaching Postures
- W.4.3 Adaptations for Vulnerable Areas of the Body
- W.4.4 Scheme of Work and Course Plan
- W.4.5 Detailed Lesson Plans
- W.4.6 Advanced Students**

##### **Externally Verified Practical Work**

- P.4.1 Teaching Asana
- FCA Final Class Assessment

## BRITISH WHEEL OF YOGA TEACHER'S DIPLOMA COURSE

### The Four Units and Key Areas of Knowledge

All work shall be Tutor Assessed prior to External Verification

#### Unit 1

#### Anatomy and Physiology related to Yoga Practice, Stress and Relaxation, Nutrition, Basic Breathing and the Setting up of a Yoga Class

##### Externally Verified Written Work

##### W.1.1 Anatomy and Physiology

###### Complete :-

Worksheet W.1.1A (i)	The Skeletal System - Part I
Worksheet W.1.1A (ii)	The Skeletal System - Part II
Worksheet W.1.1B (i)	The Muscular System - Part I
Worksheet W.1.1B (ii)	The Muscular System - Part II
Worksheet W.1.1C	The Cardiovascular System
Worksheet W.1.1D	The Respiratory System
Worksheet W.1.1E	Kinesiology of Yoga Postures

##### W.1.2 Precautions and Prohibitions

- (a) Define the terms 'precaution' and 'prohibition'
- (b) List the common ailments you might encounter in a class situation and suggest precautions and modifications to ensure safe teaching.

##### W.1.3 Stress and the Autonomic Nervous System

- (a) Define stress and give everyday examples of how stress arises.
- (b) What is the 'Fight or Flight' response? Relate this to the sympathetic branch of the autonomic nervous system.
- (c) What happens when we relax? Relate this to the parasympathetic branch of the autonomic nervous system.

##### W.1.4 Basic Breathing Techniques

Discuss how you would introduce breath awareness to your students in a class situation, including a variety of possible basic breathing techniques.

##### W.1.5 Teaching Relaxation

- (a) How would you create a relaxed atmosphere in a class?
- (b) Discuss suitable postures for relaxation.
- (c) Briefly describe a variety of relaxation techniques you might use in class.
- (d) Briefly discuss any problems with teaching deep relaxation, and how you might deal with them.

## **Externally Verified Practical Work**

### **P.1.1 Nutrition or Anatomy and Physiology / Professional Practice**

- a) Demonstrate your ability to speak in public by giving a short talk on an aspect of Nutrition or Anatomy and Physiology (10 min. max. plus 5 min. feedback session).

*Negotiate with your tutor and other group members in order to ensure that a range of exclusive topics are covered.*

- b) Prepare a handout on your topic to give out to the group as an example of your presentational skills.

### **P.1.2 Setting up a Yoga class**

**This could be assessed as group work or written work as appropriate.**

- a) How would you set up a private Yoga class?
- b) In what ways could you advertise a Yoga class?
- c) Design a poster advertising a Yoga class.
- d) What legal problems might you face in setting up a Yoga class?
- e) What general advice will students need before starting Yoga practice and how will you provide this?
- f) What information do you need about the students joining your class and for what purpose? Suggest ways in which this can be obtained.
- g) Prepare a handout to give to students during the first session of a Yoga course.

### **P.1.3 Basic Breathing and Relaxation Teaching Practice**

Within a peer group, lead a 10-minute Basic Breathing practice session, followed by a 15-minute Relaxation session. Then allow a further 5 minutes for discussion and feedback.

### **First Aid Certification**

In addition to the above, an emergency First Aid course must be undertaken during unit 1. You should negotiate with your Tutor, suitable accredited courses and submit a current certificate for verification at the end of the unit. You should also be aware that First Aid study needs to be ongoing and that your latest certificate will also be submitted for verification at the end of the course.

### **Asana**

Each Unit gives a list of asanas which must be covered in detail. Other asanas may be included, time permitting, at the discretion of the course tutor.

### ***Unit 1 asanas***

Preparation for asana, including mobility and warming techniques	
Neck Exercises	Eye Exercises
Tadasana	Savasana
Dwi Pada Pitham	Vatnyasana / Apanasana
Vajrasana	Siddhasana
Trikonasana	Uttanasana
Vrksasana	Jathara Parivrtti
Bhadrasana	

## UNIT 2

### The Hathayogapradipika, Prana, Pranayama, Mudra, Bandha, Chakras. Observation and Analysis in Teaching.

#### Externally Verified Written Work

#### **W.2.1. Theory of the Pranic Body**

- a) Explain Prana, making reference to classical and modern texts and adding your own views.
- b) Describe the different aspects of Prana.

#### **W.2.2. The Hathayogapradipika**

Please refer to the text when answering the following:

- a) Briefly describe the historical background and setting of the Hathayogapradipika and discuss the Yoga System expounded by Swatmarama.
- b) Briefly describe each of the following:
  - i) Nadis
  - ii) Granthis
  - iii) Chakras
  - iv) Kundalini
- c) What is the purpose of Kriya?
- d) Describe one Kriya you would teach, giving purpose, preparation, method, and precautions.

#### **W.2.3. Pranayama**

- a) What is Pranayama? Refer to classical texts.
- b) What is the purpose of Pranayama? Refer to classical texts.
- c) What precautions and prohibitions should practitioners be aware of in the variety of Pranayama practices listed in the main texts?
- d) Discuss the use of ratios in Pranayama.

#### **W.2.4. Mudra and Bandha**

What are Mudra and Bandha? In what ways are they used? Refer to classical and modern texts.

#### **W.2.5. Teaching Pranayama**

- a) Which of the Hathayogapradipika Kumbhakas would you teach and why?
- b) Briefly describe any breath-control practices you would teach in addition to (a).
- c) State the order and timescale in which you would teach the practices listed in a) and b) and give your reasons. Indicate when and how you would incorporate mudra and bandha with these practices.

## W.2.6 Observation and Analysis in Teaching

- a) Observe a lesson by an experienced teacher of adults in any subject other than Yoga and write an objective analysis of it in terms of its purpose and positive qualities.

Consider the following aspects:

- i. Aims and Objectives
- ii. Structure
- iii. Activity
- iv. Language
- v. Communication
- vi. Relationships
- vii. Environment

- b) What did you learn from this observation which you can make use of in your own Teaching?

### Externally Verified Practical Work

#### **P.2.1 Pranayama, Kriya, Mudra and Bandha Teaching Practice**

Take a maximum of 20 minutes to teach either a Kriya, Mudra, or Bandha, to the group and one Pranayama technique with retention. Then take 5 minutes for discussion and evaluation.

#### **P.2.2. Personal Practice of Pranayama, Mudra and Bandha**

Over a minimum 3-month period, practice a daily Pranayama Programme as recommended by your Tutor.

Keep a diary of your daily practice of these aspects, showing your development through experience of a variety of techniques. If possible relate this to changes in your physical and emotional state during the day or period.

N.B: Course Tutors will make available a Pranayama Practice Plan for students to follow and give guidance on the diary format to be used. Where students do not wish to submit a diary for verification because it contains personal information, this is acceptable provided the Tutor has seen and approved the content. Tutor should respect student confidentiality and complete the student profile booklet accordingly.

### Externally Assessed Work

#### **RTP.1 First Recorded Teaching Practice**

A Recorded Teaching Practice of minimum 90 mins. to an external group should be completed some time in this Unit. Feedback should be given, and a Recorded Teaching Practice form completed by a BWY Diploma Holder or Accredited Teacher.

## **Unit 2 Asanas**

Natarajasana	Parsvottanasana
Virabhadrasana	Paschimottanasana
Utkatasana	Salabhasana
Bhujangasana	Ardha Matsyendrasana
Adho Mukha Svanasana	Urdhva Mukha Svanasana

## UNIT 3

Yoga Philosophy, Concentration, Meditation, Mantra, Issues of Health and Safety in Teaching and First Aid.

### Externally Verified Written Work

#### **W.3.1. Vedanta Philosophy**

- a) The Upanishads
- Briefly, describe the historical background of The Upanishads.
  - Describe 3 of the main themes which recur in the Upanishads, giving references.
  - Discuss one theme in depth, giving your personal opinions.

**OR**

- b) The Bhagavad Gita
- Briefly, describe the historical background and setting of The Bhagavad Gita.
  - Give a brief summary of the main Paths of Yoga taught in this text, using quotations and references.
  - Give your views on the relevance of teaching aspects of the Gita to western yoga classes.

#### **W.3.2. The Yogasutras of Patanjali**

Please refer to the text when answering the following:

- Briefly discuss the background of Patanjali's Yogasutras. Relate this to your group work on the six Darshana and possible links between the Yogasutras and the philosophy of Samkhya.
- Give a brief summary of each of the four chapters of The Yogasutras.
- Discuss your understanding of any **two** of the following:
  - The Yogic concept of mind.
  - Kleshas.
  - Kriya Yoga (Ch. II vv 1,2)
  - The significance of Ishwara.
  - Siddhis
- Describe the Yamas and Niyamas and discuss their relevance in the modern western world.
- Discuss Dharana, Dhyana and Samadhi.

#### **W.3.3. Different Approaches to Meditation**

- What are the preferred conditions and postures for meditation? Refer to classical and modern texts.
- Discuss the main types of meditation, including any possible precautions with reference to the following classifications. Refer to classical and modern texts.
  - Sight
  - Sound
  - Breath



#### W.3.4. Teaching Concentration and Meditation

List the order in which you might introduce concentration and meditation techniques to your classes, giving your reasons.

#### W.3.5 Mantra

- What is Mantra? Include a variety of examples.
- What is the significance of OM?
- Detail your own experience of practising/teaching Mantra.

### **Externally Verified Practical Work**

#### **P.3.1. The Upanishads and Bhagavad Gita / Professional Practice**

Demonstrate your developing ability to speak in public by giving a short talk (maximum 15 minutes) on a passage from either of the above texts. This should be the text not covered in W.3.1. Vedanta Philosophy. Visual aids should be prepared and copies accompany an Assessment Form which will be completed by the Course Tutor. It is suggested that the talks be given before the written assignment is set.

#### **P.3.2. Meditation / Professional Practice**

Demonstrate your ability to lead the whole group in a short period of Meditation (15 mins. maximum). Negotiation with group and tutor should provide a variety of techniques.

#### **P.3.3. Safety in the Yoga Class**

What are the rules of safety and the current standing practices for emergencies in a learning environment?

Discuss the necessary steps that you would take regarding immediate action, emergency services and records, etc. and how the location of telephones and first aid materials are identified. Discuss how records of emergencies might be kept.

What safety problems might occur in a Yoga Class?

Discuss why it is important that any First Aid be conducted by a qualified person and that the necessary people are informed. Show an understanding of the need to protect the patient from further injury.

Discuss the differences in safety and emergency procedures between AE/FE Centres and private classes.

### **Externally Assessed Work**

#### **RTP.2 Second Recorded Teaching Practice**

A Recorded Teaching Practice of minimum 90 mins. to an external group should be completed in the second half of this Unit. Feedback should be given, and a Recorded Teaching Practice form completed by a BWY Diploma Holder.

\*\* P.4.1 Tutor Assessment of Student's teaching of Asana should start within this period \*\*

#### **Unit 3 Asana**

Gomukhasana	Garudasana
Parsvakonasana	Ustrasana
Dhanurasana	Janursirasana
Ardha Sarvangasana	Sarvangasana

**Unit 4****Professional Studies and Practical Aspects of Teaching Yoga Postures****Externally Verified Written Work****W.4.1 The purpose and preparation of Asana**

- a) What is the purpose of Asana? Make reference to classical texts.
- b) Discuss the benefits that may accrue from practising asana, quoting from the classical texts and modern sources, and making reference to anatomy and physiology.
- c) Discuss the question of counterpose.
- d) Discuss the need for strength in addition to flexibility in asana.

**W.4.2 Teaching Postures**

Describe, in detail, how you would teach two asana showing different spinal movements. Suggest suitable modifications for the less able and include preparation for the postures you have chosen.

**W.4.3 Adaptations for Vulnerable Areas of the Body**

The knees, the lumbar and cervical vertebrae are generally regarded as vulnerable areas of the body. Discuss how you would protect these areas when teaching two different postures from those chosen in element W.4.2.

**W.4.4 Scheme of Work and Course Plan**

Design a Scheme of Work and Course Plan for a ten week course for beginners. The Scheme of Work should include the following information:

- a. Organisation - number of students, time of day and duration, environmental requirements.
- b. Aims and Objectives -
  - i) Aims should set out the teacher's purpose in providing the course.
  - ii) Objectives should outline the area of student achievement targeted, ie. Cognitive, Psychomotor and Affective.
- c. Teaching methods - what methods will you employ in implementing the course? Discuss their relative importance.
- d. Content - compile a Course Plan, using an acceptable format.
- e. Assessment and Evaluation - what methods will you use to evaluate the effectiveness of the course and assess the development of yourself and your students? Design any appropriate forms or questionnaires.
- f. Resources
  - i) What resources and support will you require from a providing agency? (eg. FE College, Fitness Centre etc)
  - ii) What teaching aids will you provide yourself? Where appropriate, include examples.

#### W.4.5 Detailed Lesson Plans

Using an acceptable format, which will have spaces for contra-indications and modifications, compile detailed lesson plans for weeks two and nine of the Course Plan designed in W.4.4. The Course is for a group of 12 people as follows:

- One is a seven stone, fit, flexible 24 year old woman
- Four women aged between 40 and 54, average build, who have led a sedentary life style - one showing some development of kyphosis, two with lower back problems
- One woman, about four months pregnant
- Two men who do fairly hard manual work (eg. a plasterer and a joiner), both fit, muscular, but not too flexible
- One woman aged 50, recovering from an abdominal operation
- One man with high blood pressure
- A retired couple who are both overweight

Please show in the modifications column of your plan, how you might cater for their differing needs.

#### W.4.6 Advanced Students

Outline how you might expect to develop the group above if they stayed with you for a further two years.

N.B: This task may be set as written work, or could be dealt with by worksheets and group work. Your tutor will advise accordingly.

### Externally Verified Practical Work

#### P.4.1 Teaching Asana

This assignment should started within this unit at the latest, and may be undertaken in Unit 3.

- a) Demonstrate in a class situation a method of developing flexibility.
- b) Demonstrate, during the training Course, that you are conversant with, and competent in, preparing and using a variety of teaching aids.
- c) Demonstrate during the Course that you can prepare for, modify and teach a posture from one of the following groups to your peers:

Forward bend  
Spinal rotation

Backward bend  
Inversion

Side bend  
Balance

**An Emergency First Aid Course** must have been completed in Unit 1. A current First Aid Certificate must be attached to your Unit 4 file.

### Externally Assessed Work

#### **FCA Final Class Assessment**

A Teaching Practice of minimum 90 mins. to an external group should be completed at least three months after the Second Recorded Teaching Practice and before the end of Unit 4. This to be observed by a DCT other than the Course Tutor. Feedback will be given by the observing DCT and a Final Class Assessment Record form sent to the student with a copy to the course tutor.

### **Unit 4 Asana**

Padmasana  
Supta Vajrasana  
Chakrasana  
Surya Namaskara

Simhasana  
Sirsasana  
Parivrtti Trikonasana  
Ardha Chandrasana

